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THE NEW REPUBLIC

GOPtopia

So long Georgetown, McLean is the new home of America's ruling class

By MICHAEL CROWLEY

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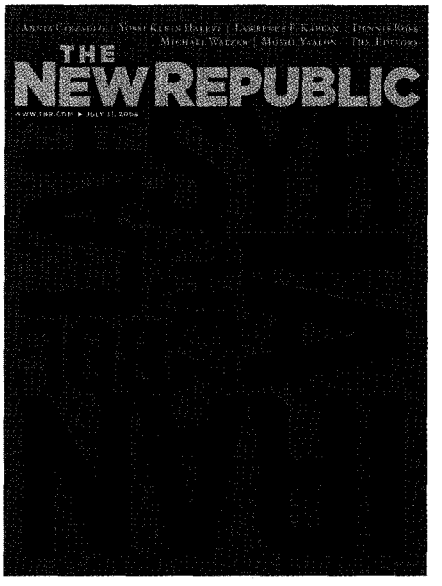
CORRESPONDENCE

SIGNING OFF

JEFFREY ROSEN TAKES A COMPLEX theory—the unitary executive—and makes it accessible to the general public ("Power of One," July 24). But I would quibble with one part of his article. Rosen downplays the Clinton administration's contribution to the theory because it interferes with his argument that the current Bush administration was influenced by the pro-executive conservatives in the Reagan and first Bush administrations. In my own work, I have found that the Clinton administration behaved much like the preceding Republican presidencies in its use of "unitarian" principles. In 1993, Office of Legal Counsel head Walter Dellinger wrote an opinion defending presidential signing statements as a device to clarify or eradicate constitutional defects in bills signed into law. The following year, in a memorandum to White House Counsel Abner Mikva, Dellinger made the case for coordinate construction—the ability for the president to independently interpret constitutional meaning. In practice, the Clinton administration refused to enforce legislation that dealt with the dissemination of abortion-related information, refused to seat a federal commission because it violated the Appointments Clause of the Constitution, refused to defend the constitutionality of legislation that forced HIV-positive military personnel out of the armed services, and refused to abide by legislation that established a semi-independent department inside the Department of Energy. In fact, in their defense of signing statements, Bush administration officials cited the Dellinger memos as precedent.

On the administrative side, President Clinton used the executive-branch agencies just like the two preceding administrations did. Clinton adopted Executive Order 12866, which absorbed the potent Reagan orders that enabled the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to monitor the work of the agencies. In fact, James Blumstein—George H.W. Bush's director of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (the muscle inside the OMB)—observed, "the Clinton administration not only accepted but also extended the unitarian premises of the Reagan and Bush administrations." I contend, therefore, that the Clinton administration was every bit as important as the Reagan and first Bush administrations in helping the current Bush administration formulate its attitude toward the unitary executive.



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JEFFREY ROSEN RESPONDS:
I agree that the Clinton Justice Department behaved much like the Reagan and Bush I Justice Departments in cases involving executive power. And I said so in my piece, which noted that, under Walter Dellinger's leadership, the Office of Legal Counsel "mostly embraced the Reagan and Bush administrations' views of the unitary executive." But, as I also noted, under the second President Bush unitary executive theory morphed into a defense of unchecked executive power abroad that no previous Republican or Democratic administration had articulated.

BURNING DOWN THE STRAUSS

DAMON LINKER THINKS THAT THE model for Straussians is their teacher's view that, in modern society, "extramoral philosopher-supermen [are] at the top [with] moral and religious simpletons in the vast middle" ("The Philosopher and Everyone Else," July 31). This is preposterous. Strauss did not promote the notion that modern Platonists are "extramoral philosopher-supermen," and, unless the so-called Straussians are driven by a self-deluding vanity, they could not regard themselves this way. Knowledge of a few seminal texts and a grasp of some of the perplexities of modern life do not a philosopher make. Nor did Strauss think they did. If anything, Strauss taught how difficult it is even to seek to become a philosopher. He himself never claimed to be one. Linker, moreover, seems to think that Strauss took a simple, skeptical posture toward religion. But, as a Jewish thinker, Strauss carefully articulated the contribution of Jerusalem—in addition to Athens—to Western civilization; that is, he speaks in a *positive* manner about what has stemmed from the Jewish tradition. Although Linker's review contains some thoughtful observations, it is regrettably marred by an animosity toward Strauss—and by a caricature of his teachings.

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UNFORTUNATELY, LINKER CONcludes his otherwise thoughtful essay on Strauss with a series of outlandish assertions that contradict every-

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thing that Strauss wrote and taught. While Strauss indeed lamented how modern ideology had engendered a "second cave"—from which thoughtful young people would need to be liberated before they could begin to address the fundamental human problems—nowhere did Strauss advocate teaching citizens "to embrace simple patriotism and unthinking piety." Such an intention is present neither in any of Strauss's writings nor in the transcripts of his classes (a number of which I attended).

If there are, among *soi-disant* Straussians, any "right-wing ideologues" who regard the writings of the American Founders as beyond rational criticism, or if there are "ironic hedonists" who find their pleasure in "contemplating the comedic absurdity of common moral attachments," such outlooks belie their supposed fidelity to Strauss's teachings. (Contrary to Linker, Allan Bloom, whom I knew fairly well, had no such contempt for people's "moral attachments.") The academic Straussians I know—and I know a lot of them—dedicate themselves to elucidating the teachings of the greatest philosophers, poets, and statesmen for the illumination those people can shed on the most fundamental human and political problems. Some, following Strauss's example, also study the Hebrew Bible itself with a seriousness that is hardly present in the so-called "higher criticism" and its contemporary offshoots.

As for those Straussians who have entered public life, however Linker may disagree with their policies, no one could reasonably fault them for a lack of commitment to the *thoughtful* service of their country—or for the defense of constitutional liberty and the equal rights of all citizens. As an initial corrective to Linker's caricature of Strauss's pedagogical intent, I recommend the opening essays on liberal education in Strauss's 1968 book, *Liberalism Ancient and Modern*.

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LINKER MAKES THE SAME UNWARranted assumption concerning the image of the cave in Plato's *Republic* Book VII as do the Straussians, and he thus seems to miss one of the pithiest and most important sentences ever

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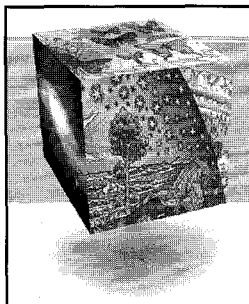

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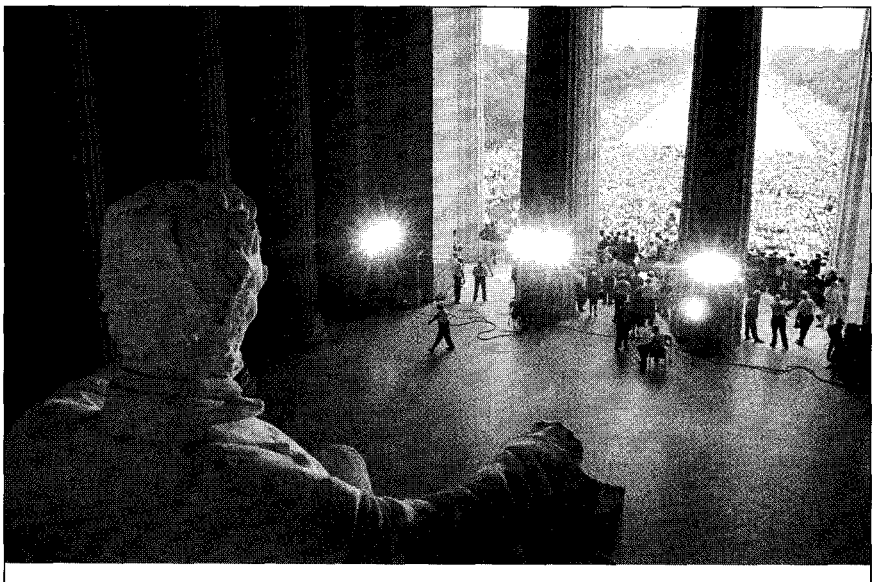

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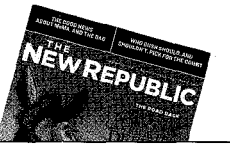

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Caucustan

TRB FROM WASHINGTON

TODAY'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY is split into three camps. The first two are relatively familiar. There are the Clinton Democrats, who consider the 1990s a triumph and think they can be replicated if the party courts the swing-voting center. There are the Dean Democrats, who consider the '90s a disaster and think they can be overcome if Democrats get tough, think big, and rally their Internet base. And then there is a third, much smaller, faction: Democrats from Iowa. They don't much care about these broader issues—as long as their caucuses stay first in the nation so they can keep hauling in money from presidential wannabes. In recent months, with Democrats rethinking their 2008 presidential nominating schedule, the three camps have waged a battle of wills. And the results are now in: It's the Iowans in a rout.

The Iowa caucuses undermine a principle that both the Clintonites and the Deaniacs hold dear: democracy. In a primary, you can vote all day; voting takes a couple of minutes; your vote is secret; and if you can't make it to the polls, you can vote absentee. To participate in the Iowa caucuses, by contrast, you must arrive exactly at 6:30 p.m., and there are no absentee ballots. (If you work the night shift, tough luck.) Once there, you must stay for several hours before publicly declaring which candidate you support. Not surprisingly, while more than 70 percent of registered Democrats participated in the New Hampshire primary in 2000 and 2004, a mere 10 to 20 percent participated in the Iowa caucuses. A few years ago, when the Bush administration suggested that Iraq use caucuses to choose its interim legislature, Ayatollah Ali Al Sistani considered the proposal such an affront to democratic principle that he sent hundreds of thousands of Shia into the streets to protest.

Beyond a general commitment to democracy, the Clintonites and the Deaniacs each have particular reasons to dislike Iowa's caucuses. Clintonism, from its very beginnings, has been suspicious of liberal interest groups—believing that they push the party too far to the left and force candidates to prostrate themselves before their parochial agendas, thus undermining any broader message. But caucuses are interest-group heaven. They empower small, highly motivated, well-organized factions, and they disempower everyone else. On both sides of the aisle, candidates who challenge core party constituencies (Scoop Jackson in 1972 and 1976, Al Gore in 1988, Paul Tsongas in 1992, John McCain in 2000, Joe Lieberman in 2004) either don't compete in Iowa or get buried there. And, in 2008, caucus-goers could prove disproportionately hostile to Hillary Clinton's aggressively centrist message. Ironically, the politician who best articulated the Clintonite critique of Iowa was Howard Dean. Speaking in 2000, when he was still a New Democrat in good standing, Dean told a Canadian talk show that, "If you look at the caucuses system, they are dominated by special interests in both parties. The special interests don't represent the centrist tendencies of the American people. They represent the extremes."

Dean probably wouldn't put it that way today. But the Internet activists who entered politics via his 2004 campaign have their own reasons for loathing Iowa. They, of course, don't mind that caucus-goers are disproportionately liberal and anti-war. (So are they.) But unlike traditional liberal interest groups, they are as interested in process as outcome. The Deaniacs are big believers in what the New Left activists of the 1960s called "participatory democracy"—the effort to revitalize representative institutions that have grown so insular and unaccountable that they remain representative in name only. And from that perspective, Iowa is a perfect target. "Kill the Iowa caucuses," declared uber-Deaniac Markos Moulitsas Zúniga in late 2004. "It's not a democratic system," he added this June.

For Democrats interested in killing the Iowa caucuses, this should have been the perfect year. To placate Democrats in Michigan—who in 2003 threatened to upend the whole system by moving their state near the front of the line—the Democratic National Committee (DNC) established a commission to reform the nominating process. For months, insiders haggled and schemed. And, a week ago, the DNC approved what the *Los Angeles Times* called "the most significant change in the presidential nominating process in years." What will this change mean? Believe it or not, a nominating process even more undemocratic than before.

Under the new system, the Iowa caucuses still go first. But, rather than keeping New Hampshire second, the party has squeezed Nevada in between—which actually enhances Iowa's power. In 2004, John Kerry came out of Iowa with so much momentum that he sewed up the nomination before voters in subsequent states had time to catch their breath. But Kerry's rivals at least had the eight days between Iowa and New Hampshire to slow him down. In 2008, by contrast, Nevada will vote a mere five days after the Hawkeye State—which makes it even more likely to prove rubber stamp. And, if that's not bad enough, Nevada is a caucus state as well, which means that the nomination fight could be largely over by the time candidates participate in a process democratic enough to be acceptable in Najaf.

How did this happen? There's plenty of blame to go around: Black and Latino activists didn't attack Iowa as undemocratic; they attacked Iowa and New Hampshire as insufficiently black and Latino. Westerners and Southerners, meanwhile, attacked them as insufficiently Western and Southern. Hence early dates for Nevada (a Western state with lots of Latinos) and then, a week after New Hampshire, South Carolina (a Southern state with lots of black people). As for Iowa, no one wanted to cross its leaders for fear that the Hawkeye State would stay number one and punish its detractors in 2008. So the Clintonites, who decry interest groups, have swallowed a plan that, by enhancing caucuses, gives interest groups even more power. And the Deaniacs, who want to democratize the Democratic Party, have swallowed a plan that leaves the nominating process even less democratic than before. No word yet on the reaction from Sistani.

PETER BEINART

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Out of Time

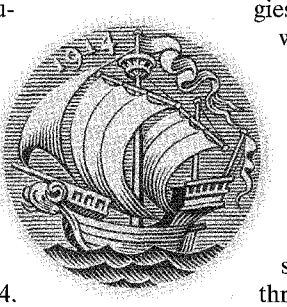
"IT IS VERY, very important that we all pay lots of attention to Darfur," Kofi Annan's deputy recently told a group of journalists. Forgive us if we are not impressed. The Western world has been paying attention to Darfur for nearly three years. During that time, some 400,000 people have died, and millions more have been displaced. In recent months, as the situation in Darfur has deteriorated further, Turtle Bay has busied itself with the crafting of resolutions and the holding of press conferences.

These activities have created an illusion many in the West have been all too happy to believe: that progress is being made toward ending the killing in Sudan.

But, while Darfur may have the attention of the United Nations, attention is not the same as action; and action is what Darfur desperately needs. This week, the United States and Britain are pushing a Security Council resolution that would authorize the deployment of U.N. peacekeepers to Darfur with a robust mandate to stop the killing. Sounds promising, right? Actually, the events of this week—combined with the events of the last several months—illustrate nothing so much as the futility of using the United Nations as a vehicle for stopping genocide.

How did we get here? The United States long maintained that the African Union (AU) should take the lead in resolving the Darfur crisis. But eventually it became clear that the ragtag AU was not up to the task of halting the killing. Then, in May, Khartoum and a Darfuri rebel faction signed a peace agreement in Abuja, Nigeria. It was widely hoped that this would clear the way for U.N. forces to replace the beleaguered AU troops.

Four months later, that hasn't happened, but here is what has: The number of civilian deaths continues to climb. The International Rescue Committee reports a "massive spike" in sexual assaults surrounding Darfur's largest displaced-persons camp. Huge swaths of Darfur remain beyond the reach of humanitarian aid. Most ominously, in the last few weeks, human rights groups have noted that the government appears to be massing troops in Darfur for the ostensible purpose of confronting rebels that did not sign the peace accord. This sounds like 2003 all over again—when Khartoum chose to fight Darfuri rebels by cleansing the region of non-Arab populations—only this time with an ugly twist: The lone rebel group that *did* sign the Abuja deal now appears to be working with the government to target civilians belonging primarily to the Fur tribe. Here is the blunt assessment of the U.N.'s top humanitarian official: "We have the worst security situation since 2004. We have the worst access since 2004. We have some of the worst atrocities since 2004."



Enter the United States and Britain with their proposal to dispatch U.N. troops. Unfortunately, the prospect of U.N. forces actually arriving in Darfur and ending the genocide remains an extreme long shot. For one thing, China and Russia—allies of Sudan—hold vetoes on the Security Council and will likely use their power to either block the U.S.-British resolution or water down the mandate given to U.N. forces. Even if China and Russia relent and the resolution passes intact, Sudan has vowed not to let U.N. troops enter its territory with a strong peacemaking mandate; and the resolution stipulates that U.N. forces will be sent to Darfur only with Khartoum's permission. Moreover, even if Sudan is bluffing and, in the end, allows U.N. troops to enter the country with a robust mandate, the process will likely take months—months that Khartoum can use to finish the ugly work of reshaping Darfur's demography.

The lesson from all this is clear: Asking the United Nations to end a genocide is a formula for ensuring that the genocide will not end speedily—or, worse, will end on the perpetrators' schedule, which is to say, only when the killing is complete. We could have chosen another path. We could have bypassed the maddeningly slow U.N. machinery, assembled a coalition of allies under the banner of NATO, and dispatched troops to Darfur ourselves—without consent from, or apologies to, the men in Khartoum who orchestrated this evil. The United States could have led the way. We still could. But doing so would require a change of heart from the Bush administration and its allies. After all, the reason we have chosen to act through the United Nations is because we evidently lack the will to act on our own—not to mention the sense of urgency. Consider the comments last November of Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer. In the course of assuring a reporter that Darfur was on the mend, she protested that "this is a long process." Yes, it is. And that is exactly the problem. ■

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Suffering's strange lessons.

Pain Principle

BY WILLIAM J. STUNTZ

THE DATE WAS December 31, 1999—my personal Y2K. I was driving my family home from a vacation and got a flat tire. I pulled the car over and started to change it. (Dumb move: I'm more the kind of person who breaks things than the kind who fixes them.) Something nasty happened at the base of my back. Ever since, my lower back and right leg have hurt, usually a lot.

Doctors sometimes call it Failed Back Syndrome. It's a great phrase: My back may be a failure, but I've got a *syndrome*, which sounds like a badge of honor in our therapeutic culture. Unfortunately, it's also a synonym for "thing nobody understands." Whatever my syndrome is, it doesn't show up on a CT-scan. And it doesn't seem amenable to surgical fixes. I've had three fusions (the surgeon typically removes a lumbar disk and locks the adjacent vertebrae together with bone grafts and metal screws): one when I was a teenager in the mid-'70s, the other two since my car suffered from Failed Tire Syndrome. The first fusion worked—I felt pretty much normal until middle age. The second and third, not so much. So I wander from specialist to specialist, looking for ways to get my pain down to a manageable level without making me too foggy-headed to work.

The specialists, most of them anyway, don't know what to do with me. Medical practice is all about snapshots: Measure the patient's condition, prescribe the treatment, then measure again. That approach works for static, on-off problems with easy fixes. But pain isn't static, it isn't on-off, and there are no easy fixes. Chronic pain is like a living, breathing thing with a mind and will of its own; it grows and moves and adapts. The snapshots—and most of the specialists—miss that. So each doctor clicks the shutter and applies the relevant specialty's preferred fix: this drug, that surgery, some new exercise program. Afterward, when I still hurt, they tend to get frustrated. That's usually when I'm diagnosed with Failed Patient Syndrome.

I USED TO think the "chronic" part of chronic pain was the really bad part. Now I'm not so sure. Neverending pain wears you down; it's exhausting. But, on the whole, I think I'd rather have constant pain than the variable kind.

If that sounds bizarre, bear with me. Pain is largely about the gap between expectation and reality: the distance between what you feel now and what your mind tells you you're supposed to feel. As reality slides downhill, expectations slide, too. Which makes reality feel less awful. Several times during the past half-dozen years, my baseline pain level has kicked up—say, from a 3 on a 0–10 scale to a 7. (Doctors love that pain scale, which is one more example of the snapshot problem.) At first, it feels horrible: 7 is bad news; walking around feeling that kind of pain all the time can be sheer hell. But, after a while, you get better at dealing with it. The bigger pain starts to feel smaller; 7 becomes what 4 once was. And 4 starts to feel like 1; it's just background noise—the pain equivalent of elevator music. I don't remember what it feels like to get out of bed in the morning, stretch, walk to the bathroom, and feel no pain in my back. For me, that older and happier baseline has disappeared.

That sounds sad, but it isn't. Forgetting the world of easy stretching and long, pain-free walks has been a great mercy. My mind doesn't tell me I'm supposed to be pain-free. Instead, it tells me to expect bad times. Which means I'm no longer quite so disappointed when bad times come.

Something very important follows from this. Hope hurts; optimism amplifies suffering. The pain-free, healthy world is gone; this is my world now. If I can make those long-ago sensations vanish, a portion of my pain vanishes with them. One cannot feel the absence of a nonexistent thing. Let the thing become real again, and its absence stings. Norman Vincent Peale, apostle of the theology of positive thinking, got it wrong: Pessimism is power. Hopelessness turns out to be surprisingly good medicine.

SOMETIMES THE PAIN itself seems to have medicinal value; it brings strange pleasures in its wake. Good food tastes better than it did before. I've always loved looking at water: the ocean, rivers, the Chesapeake Bay that was a block away from our living room when I was a kid. I love it more now. Great music sounds better. (Bad music sounds worse: I'm glad my children are finally too old for middle-school orchestras.) All good sensations feel better.

Work feels more satisfying, even though it's much harder to do. I was never much of an athlete, but I imagine it's similar to the sense a distance runner gets when finishing a marathon. Especially the *first* marathon: You've reached the edges of your capacity, pushed the envelope farther than you thought it could go. The feeling of accomplishment is indescribably powerful. I didn't realize it, but, before my back took its turn toward hell, I never used all my capacities. Now, most things I do take every ounce of me. Athletes have a terrific expression for this phenomenon: They say, "He left it all on the field," meaning there was nothing held back; the reserves were all spent. These days, I leave it all on the field—because there isn't any good alternative. For the first time, I know the satisfaction of doing the very best I can do. Pain gave me that.

And pain gave me one more good thing: It taught me to live in the present, not the past and future. Before my back

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went south, my mind was so full of past regrets and future wants that the present could hardly find a home. Now, I have to concentrate harder to do anything, so I'm more focused on what I'm doing—not on what it might get me or what I should have done differently. Today, the part of my mind that deals with everything other than my back is occupied with living. Before, it focused more on satisfying my many wants and regretting my many mistakes. Wanting and regretting take a lot of energy, and I don't have much energy to spare. So I do less of both than in my earlier, healthier life.

Maybe that's why life's pleasures please me more than they did before that sad New Year's Eve in what seems, and was, another century. It's a nice irony: When chronic pain arrives and then announces that it's here to stay, you would give anything for numbness. *Please, God, just dull the sensations; let me feel as little as possible.* Instead, pain gives you the opposite: You feel everything, and you feel it all intensely. Needless to say, the feeling isn't all good. But it isn't all bad either.■

George Allen's nightmare.

Webb Feat

BY MICHELLE COTTLE

THE SENATE CANDIDATE looks awkward—even shy—as a plumpish, middle-age woman crosses the dimly lit rec room filled with members of the Arlington, Virginia, Kiwanis Club to shake his hand. With firm efficiency, Democratic nominee Jim Webb grips the proffered appendage, gives a slight nod, then swiftly retreats into his personal space—until another well-wisher steps forward, necessitating a similar interaction. Grip, nod, retreat. Grip, nod, retreat. After three or four such exchanges, Webb is interrupted by campaign aides, who have promised the waiting TV cameras a few minutes of face time with the candidate. As they escort him away from the lingering Kiwanians, Webb does not appear sorry to go.

Watching James H. Webb run to replace Republican George Allen as the junior senator from Virginia, there's no mistaking the first-time candidate for the sort of "career politician" so often derided by voters. A military hero, Reagan-era secretary of the Navy, and author of widely praised war novels, Webb has exactly the kind of CV that makes Republicans (of which he was one until recently) very, very nervous. But, despite a rough-and-tumble background and good-ole-boy roots—Webb's most recent book is a nonfiction look at his Scots-Irish heritage and Appalachian ancestors—he lacks the wisecracking, back-slapping persona generally associated with Southern pols. Friends say he's a great storyteller, but, as a public orator, Webb is neither conversational nor inspirational, imbuing speeches with all the pizzazz of a military briefing. (As Webb laid out his Iraq vision for the Kiwanians, one older gent seated near the dais kept involuntarily resting his eyes.) To Webb's advantage, his ruddy cheeks, feisty red hair (neatly trimmed, of course), and fit (if not exactly towering) physique belie his 60 years. But there is something a little too reserved and guarded about the pale blue eyes, making him seem vaguely ill-at-ease when working a crowd or enduring a press Q&A. Try as he might, confronted with a roomful of strangers—be they voters or potential donors—Webb can't help but look as though he'd rather be bow hunting.

Webb's ambivalent stump style is all the more vivid when contrasted with the master glad-handing of his opponent, Senator George Allen. Quick with a joke and an easy grin, Allen has spent over two decades honing his good-ole-boy shtick—not to mention his fund-raising talents—to the point where he was, until recently, seen as a shoo-in for reelection and a serious presidential contender for 2008. Then came Macaca-gate, a historically idiotic blunder in which, at a lily-white rally in southwest Virginia, Allen singled out a Webb campaign volunteer of Indian descent for ridicule, twice calling the young man "Macaca"—a term that, in certain Francophone countries (including Tunisia, from which Allen's mother hails), is a derogatory epithet for dark-skinned folk. Thanks to botched damage-control by Team Allen, the flub quickly became national news, the senator's poll numbers began sinking, and Virginians suddenly had themselves a real race. In a high-stakes election year that has Democrats dreaming about the six-seat gain needed to retake the Senate, Virginia voters—and candidate Webb—are increasingly being sized up for their potential to deliver that magical margin of victory.

To succeed, Webb will need more than an impressive backstory and an embattled opponent. For starters, the campaign needs money—and lots of it. Webb's name recognition in the state is still low, and, with less than half a million dollars on hand, he lacks the wherewithal to properly introduce himself through paid media. (Allen, by contrast, has more than $6 million—out of $12 million raised so far—with which to bury Webb in ads in the post–Labor Day homestretch.) But just as vexing as the money gap, Webb must contend with the electorate's enduring obsession with "authentic" politicians. By most measures, Webb is precisely the sort of candidate people claim to want, especially in times of uncertainty: a straight-shooting, decisive war hero with a reputation for acting (at times even overreacting) on principle, who is so incapable of artifice and of kowtowing to special interests that he can't bring himself to grovel, even in the vital quest for campaign cash. Allen, meanwhile, is the product of a wealthy, suburban upbringing, a "career politician," who, for all his swagger and tough talk, never served in the military. The irony is that, so far, Webb's genuine authenticity has been trumped by Allen's faux version: the cowboy boots, dipping tobacco, and Confederate nostal-

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gia from which the senator, a California native, has constructed his down-home persona. In the end, the Virginia Senate race may come down to a question of just how much authenticity voters really want.

ON PAPER, Jim Webb is a Democratic dream candidate. He is a social moderate, an economic populist, and, most important, a harsh critic of the Iraq war. Indeed, the administration's mismanagement of Iraq outraged him so badly that it actually prompted his defection from the GOP. Unlike, say, John Kerry, Webb has a military record that defies "swift-boating"—featuring two Purple Hearts, one Silver Star, two Bronze Stars, and a Navy Cross—and an upbringing macho enough to make George Allen drool with envy. While his parents both hailed from the South, Webb was a military brat who bumped from base to base (and even country to country) growing up. In the Webb family, boys were bred to appreciate the fine arts of hunting, fishing, and fisticuffs. In *Born Fighting: How the Scots-Irish Shaped America*, Webb recalls the rites of passage of his childhood—the bait-casting, the coon-hunting, the street-brawling—affectionately dubbing the process "the Redneck Bar Mitzvah."

After high school, Webb spent a year in NROTC at the University of Southern California before transferring to the Naval Academy. Graduating in 1968, he took a commission with the Marines and soon thereafter headed for Vietnam. In his 1995 book, *The Nightingale's Song*, Robert Timberg notes that, during one two-month period in 1969, 56 men in Webb's platoon were killed or wounded, including some of his closest friends. Nor did Webb himself escape unscathed. One day in July 1969, Webb was out clearing spider holes with comrade Mac McDowell when a Viet Cong sprang up and lobbed a grenade at the pair. Webb shot the enemy soldier, shoved McDowell to the ground, and threw himself between his friend and the grenade. Thirty-seven years later, Webb still carries pieces of the shrapnel in a kidney and at the base of his skull. The incident earned him a Navy Cross, the Armed Forces' second-highest combat medal.

It also ended his military career. Anxious to return to the field, Webb cut short treatment on a knee wound and tried to ignore the subsequent infection. (Recounts Timberg, "One morning he squatted down to make coffee and the wound burst open. A clot of pus and dead skin the size of a tennis ball blew out of his knee. He had the battalion surgeon clean it up and give him a shot of penicillin, then returned to his platoon.") The infection spread, eventually wreaking so much damage that, despite two years of grueling rehabilitation, Webb was ruled incapable of ever again leading troops. Faced with the prospect of life behind a desk, he resigned in 1972 and decided to try his hand at law.

As a first-year law student at Georgetown, Webb suffered massive culture shock as, for the first time, he found himself surrounded by civilians who considered military service dishonorable. Looking to put a human face on the war, Webb began writing his first novel, *Fields of Fire*. A grim tale of one platoon's experience in Vietnam, the book became a critically acclaimed best-seller, and it is still considered a classic war novel. More books followed, along with forays into journalism—both with a focus on military matters. Perhaps most notably, on October 14, 1983, Webb broadcast a report for PBS's "MacNeil/Lehrer News Hour" from Beirut, where American troops were charged with helping the Lebanese fend off Syrian forces. Still stinging from the betrayals of Vietnam (to this day Webb considers the U.S. pullout a disgrace), Webb feared a similarly fuzzy mission—and disastrous outcome—in Lebanon. He closed his report with the admonition: "These men are trusting their very lives to the wisdom of our leaders. Our government's obligation to them, which was too frequently betrayed in Vietnam, is to proceed with a clarity of purpose that matches their own trust and commitment." The report won Webb an Emmy. More enduring, however, was the foreign policy lesson he took away from Beirut: "Never get involved in a five-sided argument that's been going on for 2,000 years."

Between writing and reporting, Webb periodically returned to the public sector. Though he was raised a Democrat, his disgust with the party's attitude toward the Vietnam war, and U.S. power more broadly, prompted him to change teams following Jimmy Carter's election in 1976. In 1977, the Republicans recruited him to serve as counsel to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. From 1984 to 1987, President Reagan appointed him to be the first assistant secretary of defense for reserve affairs. And, in April 1987, Webb was sworn in as secretary of the Navy—only to resign ten months later in protest of planned fleet cuts (a move either principled, petulant, or both, depending on whom you ask). Through it all, Webb has remained resolute in his position that U.S. forces must be deployed with the greatest care. And it is this belief, and the sense that the Bush administration is misusing the military, that prompted Webb to come back to the Democratic Party and run for Senate.

Though Webb resists being labeled a one-issue candidate—"We're also pushing hard on economic fairness and social issues," he stresses in a phone interview—he admits to having become an anti-Iraq-war candidate "almost by default." Indeed, well before declaring his candidacy, Webb was hawking a plan for extricating the United States from Iraq that calls for, among other measures, publicly clarifying our long-term military intentions there, halting work on the permanent bases currently under construction, and temporarily redeploying forces to neighboring countries, such as Jordan and Kuwait. It's a plan, he says, that most voters regard as sensible—certainly in contrast to the current morass, which, he likes to point out, Senator Allen continues to support wholeheartedly.

WHATEVER THE MERITS of Webb's plan, most Virginians may never hear of it. He won the Democratic primary over a much better-funded opponent, thanks to clever voter

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What Does This Stand For?

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targeting, endorsements by party players like Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC) Chairman Chuck Schumer, and a grassroots drive by bloggers. (Webb informs me with pride that his campaign didn't run a single ad during the primary.) But taking down an equally anonymous, equally charisma-challenged primary opponent was one thing. Unseating a well-known, famously schmooze-happy incumbent Republican, in what is still a red-leaning state, is quite another. Even without ads, the Webb campaign, as its political guru Steve Jarding notes, "came out of the primary broke." And, with Labor Day looming, it faces being outspent some ten to one by Team Allen. Unfortunately for Team Webb, so many of the traits that make its candidate so appealing in theory—his seriousness, his lack of artifice, his self-reliance, his distaste for schmoozing, and his much acclaimed integrity—in practice make him a problematic campaigner and a downright lousy fund-raiser.

University of Virginia political scientist and pundit Larry Sabato calls Webb's campaign style "diffident." At campaign events, Webb supporters seem more intellectually impressed than energized or inspired, and some express outright disappointment. "I'm not confident in his political style, and he's certainly not a charismatic speaker," notes one skeptical gentleman at an event in Charlottesville. Even the candidate's friends admit he doesn't come across as the happiest of political warriors. "I think the best advice Jim got in his entire campaign came from me," says former Senator Bob Kerrey, who became friends with Webb on a joint trip to Vietnam in the early '90s. "I told him, 'Just force yourself to smile.' He gives the impression of not being very friendly, because he's got this very serious look on his face." Campaigning is an acquired taste for most people, Kerrey adds, "It takes time to get over the discomfort of interrupting somebody's lunch, when they're having a conversation, to have to walk over and say, 'Hi, I'm Jim Webb.' " Worse still is the feeling of being a supplicant, says the campaign veteran. "You have to ask people for help, which is something that oftentimes doesn't come naturally to human beings—especially men."

It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that the word on the street has long been that Webb can be an arrogant mule. (As Timberg writes, "Webb, it is said, can be mean, vindictive, self-important, and overbearing. Such criticism is not confined solely to critics.") The DSCC, say observers, has not been impressed with the ex-Marine's stubbornly lackluster campaign style and, most specifically, its impact on his cash flow. This is presumed to be one of the reasons the party was so slow to focus its attention—and its check-writing—on the campaign.

But, post-Macaca, everyone is giving the race a second look, holding their breath and waiting to see if Allen's poll numbers stay weak and the bump in attention translates into a bump in Webb's fund-raising. (One small but hopeful sign: During the week of August 20, Webb bagged far more new donations than any other candidate in the "netroots fund-raising push" on the liberal website *ActBlue*.) According to Jarding, the campaign's fund-raising has tripled, a reenergized blogosphere is "going crazy," and the national Dems have promoted Webb from number 8 to number 6 on their list of "hopeful" races. Though he declined to discuss amounts, Jarding assured me that "the DSCC has committed to begin writing checks."

In the meantime, Webb's supporters are hard at work spinning his stylistic negatives into positives, deriding George Allen as a slick-talking phony, and pitching Webb as the genuine article. "People are tired of politicians," insists Webb's long-time literary agent, Pete Donaldson. Webb, by contrast, is "real. He has integrity." "If he seems uncomfortable, part of the reason is that part of what you have to do when campaigning is to change a little bit," says Kerrey, adding that the idea of changing anything he says or does to meet other people's expectations is foreign to Webb. "He is," concludes the former senator, "authentic."

But, in Webb's case, authentic too often can mean authentically stubborn, stiff, or just plain boring. In early August, at a stop on Webb's "kitchen table" listening tour, a half-dozen voters milled around Dawn and Keith Bradshaw's modest Charlottesville home, snacking on oversized cookies and patiently awaiting the candidate. When Webb at last appeared, half an hour late, he hovered briefly at the edge of the gathering, as if loath to break up the party. Then, offering a brief apology, he did a round of hellos (grip, nod, retreat) and quickly moved to get the official discussion underway. No idle chit-chat. No casual one-on-one with the hostess or the guests. Just wham, bam, let's get down to business. Which, when you think about it, is how a serious, committed, no-nonsense, "authentic" leader probably should behave in such situations. Unless, of course, he is hoping to win an election.■

Katherine Harris, still crazy.

Makeup Call

BY JONATHAN CHAIT

Not very long ago, the term conservatives most often used to describe Katherine Harris was "rock star." Writing in *The Weekly Standard*, John Podhoretz praised her as "a local official in Florida who looked to the letter of the law for guidance at a time when we needed the law the most." Among conservatives, this was one of the more measured assessments. In the eyes of her admirers, she was Mother Teresa, Marie Curie, and Joan of Arc all rolled into one—passionate, deeply moral, and honest as the day is long. Not only that, she was also smart as a whip and a looker to boot. ("In person, Mrs. Harris comes across as brainy, ultrapetite and softly

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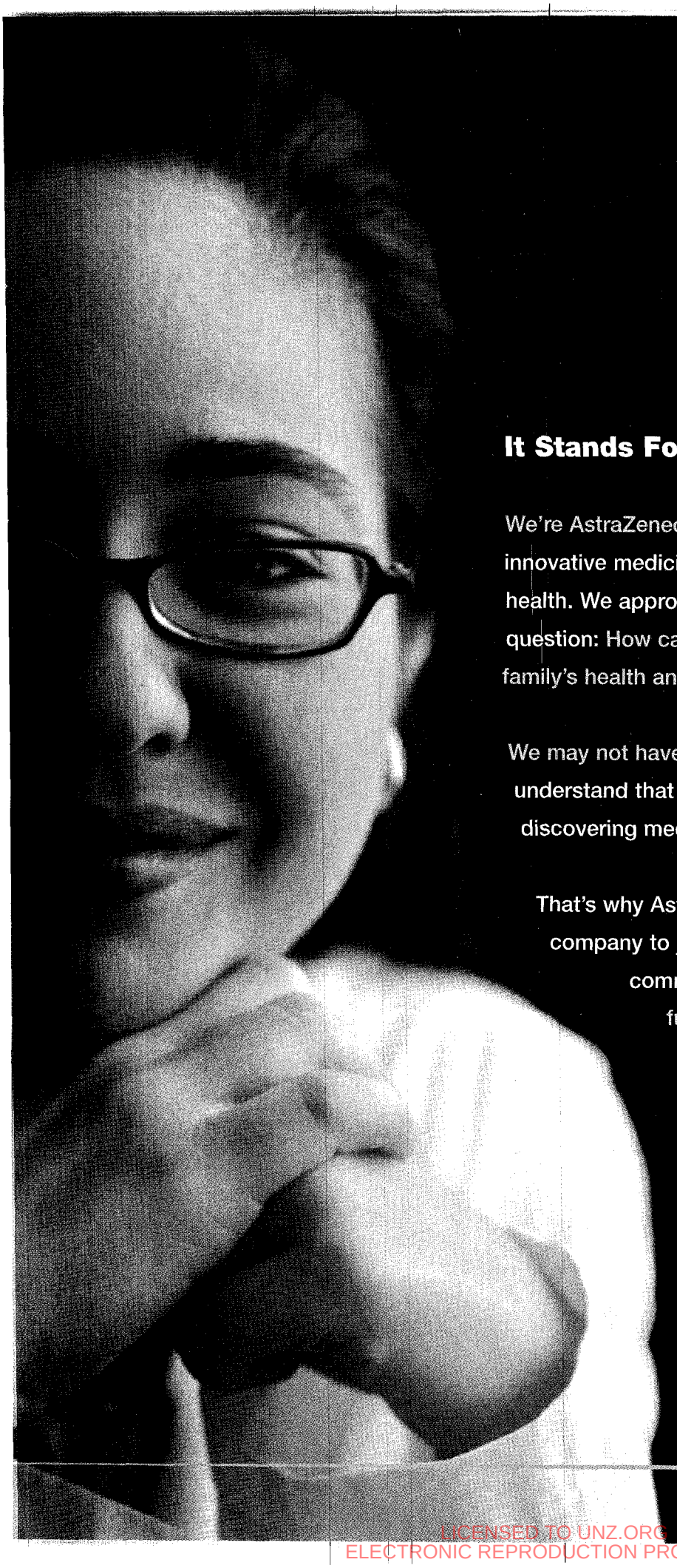

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glamorous," reported *The Washington Times*.)

In the last few months, though, many of Harris's starry-eyed fans have undertaken a critical reappraisal of their erstwhile heroine. It turns out that she may not be a paragon of sound judgment after all. Today, conservatives tend to describe Harris with synonyms for "insane."

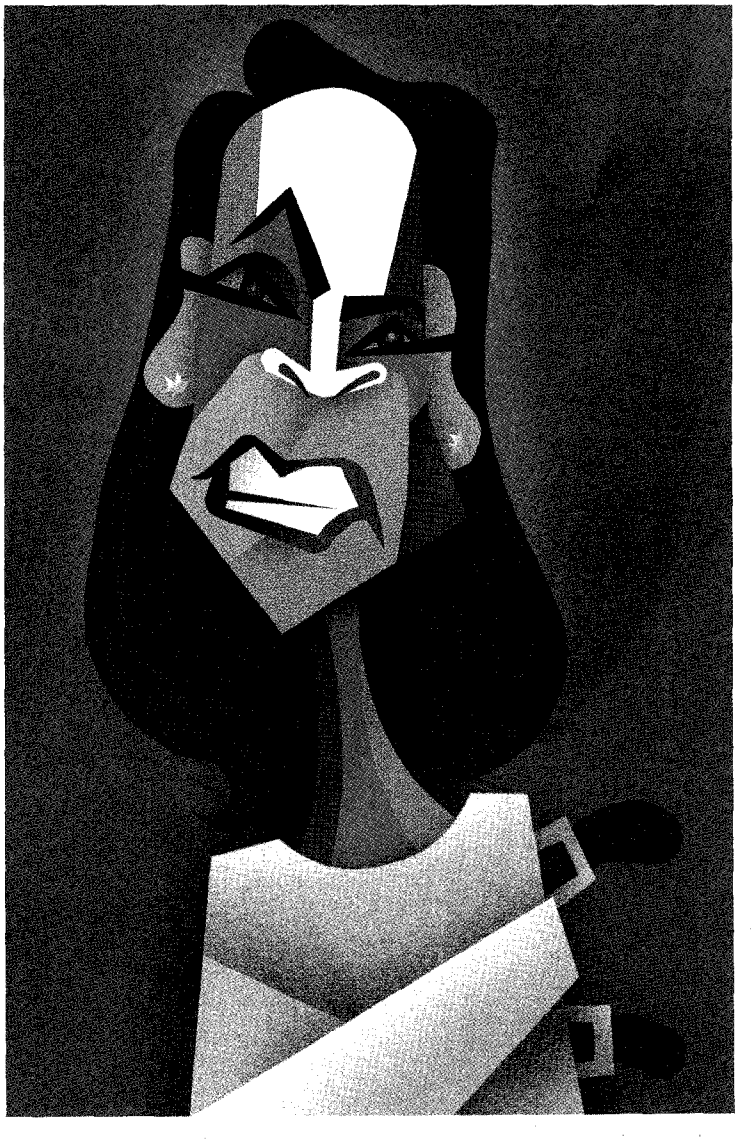
The newfound Republican doubts about Harris spring not from a single event, but an accumulation of small, bizarre episodes. She made a speech about a terrorist plot (to blow up a power grid in Indiana) that turned out to be wholly imaginary. She accused newspapers of publishing doctored photographs of her. She has raged against her staff, accusing aides of secretly working for her opponent. Since 2003, while serving as a member of Congress and running for Senate, she has had four chiefs of staff and four press secretaries leave her office. In 2006 alone, more than a dozen staffers have quit. Many of them have described her erratic behavior and irrational tirades to the press.

Harris's ongoing meltdown has rendered her politically radioactive. Her November opponent, Democrat Bill Nelson, was initially considered one of the most vulnerable Democratic incumbents in the Senate. Yet Harris's campaign has been such a disaster that polls show her losing by 30 points. A number of Republicans, including, reportedly, representatives of Jeb Bush, have pleaded with her to quit the race so the party can put up a stronger challenger, but she has adamantly refused, insisting that God wants her to be a senator. (This sort of rationale is notoriously difficult to refute.) Indeed, appeals to reason by her fellow Republicans seem only to have stiffened her resolve. Jeb Bush's efforts to recruit another GOP challenger "drove her crazy, but it didn't take her long to get there," former Harris pollster Ed Rollins told *The Miami Herald*.

OH, YOU DON'T say. It's gratifying to see Republicans acknowledge that Harris is a batty, irrational megalomaniac who's in way over her head. But some of us picked up on that quite some time ago. When she first emerged on the national scene during the Florida recount, Harris was known as a "polarizing" figure—one who inspired wildly different reactions among conservatives and liberals. That the assessment of Harris is increasingly a matter of bipartisan consensus is all to the good. And yet, it seems that the full historic implications of this new consensus have not been sufficiently explored.

Harris, after all, played a singularly decisive role in making George W. Bush president. As Florida's secretary of state, she initially forbade counties from conducting their own recounts, delaying the process for weeks so that, when the recount eventually started, it could not be completed in time for the deadline to certify electors. As Lance deHaven-Smith, a Florida State University political scientist and author of *The Battle for Florida*, told *The Tampa Tribune*, "It would never have gone to the Supreme Court if she had simply allowed the counties to complete their recounts." *Deadlock*, *The Washington Post*'s history of the recount, concurred: "What is clear is that Bush enjoyed an enormous advantage because of the presence of his brother in the governor's office and Katherine Harris as secretary of state." Democrats and Republicans still view the Florida recount as divergently as they once viewed Harris. Now that a new consensus is forming that Harris is a loon, though, shouldn't a new consensus on the recount she conducted follow?

The full extent of Harris's influence has faded from the public memory because of two subsequent events. The first is the *Bush* v. *Gore* decision, which made the Supreme Court, not Harris, seem to be the final arbiter of the election. Left forgotten by the *Bush* v. *Gore* controversy was the fact that several of Harris's interventions on behalf of Bush had been deemed illegal by the Florida courts, and they were never



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EVENT DETAILS

September 15, 2006
1:00pm - 5:00pm

Brookings Institution,
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EVENT SCHEDULE

1:00pm **A Hamilton Project Discussion on Innovative Reforms to Unemployment Insurance and the Concept of "Universal Insurance"**

Panelists: **Jeffrey Kling,** The Brookings Institution
Howard Rosen, The Institute for International Economics
Jacob Hacker, Yale University

2:00pm **Can We Increase Economic Security Without Harming Economic Growth?**

Moderator: **Franklin Foer,** The New Republic

Panelists: **Jacob Hacker,** Yale University
Brink Lindsey, Cato Institute
Peter R. Orszag, The Hamilton Project

3:00pm **What Single Policy Change Would Best Promote Broad-Based Economic Growth?**

Moderator: **Glenn H. Hutchins,** Silver Lake Partners

Panelists: **Kevin Hassett,** American Enterprise Institute
Robert Kuttner, The American Prospect
Gene B. Sperling, Center for American Progress

4:00pm **Economic Security in a Changing World: A Discussion**

Moderator: **Jonathan Chait,** The New Republic

Panelists: **Roger C. Altman,** Evercore Partners
Peter R. Orszag, The Hamilton Project
Robert E. Rubin, Citigroup Inc.
Laura D'Andrea Tyson, London Business School

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subsequently vindicated. These included her insisting that recounted ballots not accepted by the November 14, 2000, deadline were invalid and her maintaining that she lacked the discretion to accept manual recounts. In both cases, the Florida Supreme Court ruled against her unanimously.

What aided Harris even more was a 2001 recount of the Florida ballots by the National Opinion Research Center, conducted for a media consortium, which seemed to suggest that Bush would have won even without her or the Supreme Court. The media recount came out just weeks after the September 11 attacks, and the participating newspapers appeared to bend over backward to avoid tainting President Bush's legitimacy. Some press accounts asserted that a statewide recount—which Al Gore had futilely pleaded with Bush to accept and which the Florida Supreme Court ultimately ordered—"would have favored Bush," as *The Washington Post* put it.

This conclusion, however pleasing to the national psyche, was totally false. (See "Count Down," November 26, 2001.) It rested on the assumption that only ballots that had registered no vote at all—those pesky hanging chads—would have been counted. In reality, several counties were examining ballots that had been initially disqualified for registering two votes. There turned out to be a large net gain for Gore in such ballots, which typically included a vote for Gore as well as a write-in vote for Gore. The voting machines initially disqualified these votes, but a hand examination counted them because the intent of the voter was clear. And, if those votes had been included, Gore would have carried Florida.

And yet, both the *Bush* v. *Gore* decision and the media recount prompted Harris and her supporters to proclaim loudly she had been vindicated. (Democrats, meanwhile, eager not to be seen as sore losers, mostly held their tongues.) As a result, the initial, correct impression that Harris had steered the recount toward Bush faded, and her self-proclaimed role as neutral arbiter of the law stood mostly unchallenged.

HARRIS REMAINED AN icon among conservatives until very recently, and the degeneration of her image from wise public servant to nutbag has been abrupt. Most Republicans have chosen to treat her eccentric displays as a sudden and unforeseeable outbreak of delirium—ones that happened to coincide with the moment that she became a strategic liability for the party. After Harris floated unsubstantiated rumors that Joe Scarborough (a former GOP member of Congress whom Harris viewed as a potential primary rival) may have killed one of his interns, Scarborough noted, "That was the first clue that something wasn't right with Katherine Harris."

In fact, there were plenty of clues to that effect from the very beginning. One such clue was Harris's oft-stated belief that she was the modern-day incarnation of the biblical heroine Queen Esther. ("If I perish, I perish," she would proclaim dramatically, perhaps confusing Esther with Jesus.) During the recount, Harris made this analogy to her staff so frequently that, as the *Post* reported, her underlings finally begged, "No more Esther stories!"

Or there was the time, during the heat of the recount, when Harris told reporters, "I dreamed that I would ride into this stadium [the site of the Florida/Florida State football game] on a horse, carrying the FSU flag in one hand and the [election] certification in the other—while everyone around me cheered." Some of us took this statement as another fairly strong clue that Harris was something less than the dispassionate, ultra-professional public servant her supporters made her out to be.

Harris's many confidence-shaking displays as a Senate candidate really ought not to come as such a surprise to the GOP. When it first became clear, immediately after the 2000 election, that Harris would be directing the process that would determine the next president, Republican leaders panicked. In her first press conference, two days after the election, she was vague and ill-informed and didn't evince a sense that she would, or could, take control of the recount as the Republicans desired. "Harris knew so little about the legal and procedural issues that the chances of this kind of hesitancy from her were even greater," reported Jeffrey Toobin in *Too Close to Call*, a history of the recount.

Republicans close to Bush dispatched J. M. "Mac" Stipanovich, a veteran Florida Republican lawyer well-versed in election law, to serve as Harris's close adviser. From that point on, decisions became more decisive and uniformly pro-Bush. When asked by the *Post* if he was coordinating his decisions with the Bush campaign, Stipanovich tellingly refused to offer a denial. Certainly, Harris's adversaries did not see her as the brains of the operation. Ron Klain, a lawyer for Gore's recount team, recalls that, every time his side would raise an objection to one of Harris's decrees in a face-to-face meeting, she would reply, "Thank you, but I've made my decision." "She couldn't defend her position," says Klain.

Today, of course, it is the Florida Republican Party experiencing the frustration that once only Gore's legal team knew. As Harris likes to tell supporters, by way of defending her suicidal Senate campaign, "I have a little bit of a history of sticking to my guns."

Florida may be the last remaining taboo of the Bush presidency. Conservatives have questioned Bush's domestic record, his foreign policy, even (in the recent case of Scarborough) his intelligence. None have bothered to reinterpret Florida. But the bedrock assumption of the conservative interpretation of Florida is that Harris is a sober, competent, and upstanding public servant. If you assume that Harris is none of those things, then the whole denouement of 2000—and, by extension, the very legitimacy of Bush's presidency—takes on a strikingly different cast.

What do you say, conservatives? Now that some of you are willing to contemplate that Bush has been a disappointment—or even a disaster—is it too much to consider the possibility that he never should have become president in the first place? ■

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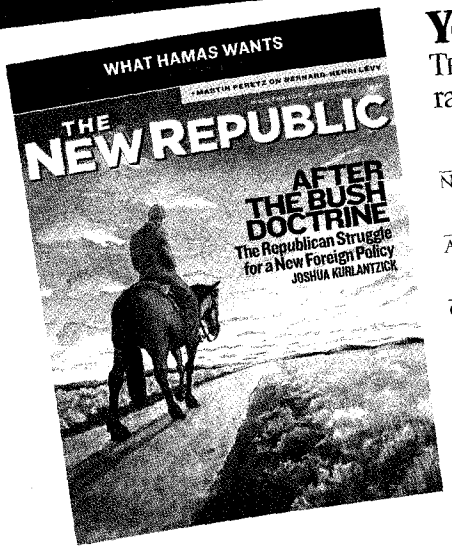
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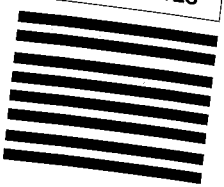

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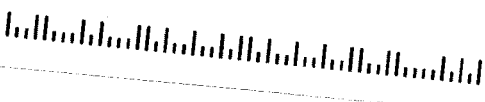

Welcome to McLean, home of America's ruling class.

GOPtopia

BY MICHAEL CROWLEY

SURRY HILL. So reads a plaque at the end of the long, winding private road that leads to the crown jewel of McLean, Virginia: the 18,000-square-foot mansion that Republican lobbyist Ed Rogers and his wife Edwina call home. To get there from Washington, you drive across the Potomac River and along a parkway that, in the summer, is canopied by lush green trees. Shortly before the guarded entrance to the CIA, you turn off McLean's main road and then down a private lane, passing through brick gate posts adorned with black lanterns and into a grand cul-de-sac. A massive brick Colonial with majestic, white Georgian columns looms above a perfectly manicured lawn. Tall trees surround the house; no other buildings are in view. But the best way to appreciate the grandeur of the estate—originally zoned for nine separate homes and featuring streams, ponds, and a pair of waterfalls—is from above. The Rogerses once hired a helicopter to take aerial photos of the property, which they converted into postcards—a project requiring a paranoid, post–September 11 CIA's grudging approval.

On a recent summer afternoon, Edwina, a petite Alabaman with a demure Southern charm, opened the door to her house. Edwina doesn't know the total number of rooms in Surry Hill, but an elevator services the house's three floors. Upstairs, Edwina's bathroom (one of eight) features a small fireplace by the tub. But she is proudest of her home's dazzling—and eclectic—art collection. "We do a lot of lobbying for foreign governments. I just can't imagine any country we haven't gotten a piece from," she explains. Sashaying from room to room like a docent, she points out the eight-foot steel-plated pantry door from Rajasthan, the light fixtures from Venice, and the four Taiwanese stone statues, each weighing 300 pounds, embedded in her dining room wall. (The floor had to be reinforced with steel to support them.) Her most delicate pieces are housed in their own "art gallery"—a white-walled room where ancient figurines, pottery, and pieces of jewelry lay on cream-colored stands under Plexiglas. "We hired the company that does the Smithsonian's display cases," Edwina explains. One tiny statue, from Peru, is labeled:

Monkey effigy
Moche variant
200–700

Within Republican circles, Surry Hill is an iconic place—a Shangri-la for those who toil on Capitol Hill and along K Street. ("Have you seen Surry Hill?" Republicans are apt to say. "You've got to go.") It's also a testament to the rewards awaiting ambitious conservatives in modern Washington, where unprecedented wealth is being made from the business of politics. Just ask the Rogerses, who have ridden a boom in Washington lobbying during the last decade. Edwina, a former Republican Hill staffer and Bush White House aide, worked at the Washington Group, chaired by former GOP Representative Susan Molinari, whose clients have included Boeing and the government of Bangladesh. Ed, a former aide in the Reagan and first Bush White Houses and a regular on shows like MSNBC's "Hardball," co-founded the powerhouse lobbying firm of Barbour Griffith & Rogers in 1991. Last year, the firm—whose clients include Eli Lilly, Verizon, Lorillard Tobacco Company, and the governments of India and Qatar—reported revenue of $19 million. Built from these lobbying riches in 2002, Surry Hill is the psychic center of McLean. And McLean, in turn, has become the psychic center of the Washington Republican establishment.

McLean covers just 18 square miles and has a population of 40,000. But it is packed with the people who impeached Bill Clinton, elected George W. Bush, launched the Iraq war, and have now learned to make millions from their association with government. Some are famous—people like Bill Kristol and Colin Powell, Scooter Libby and Newt Gingrich, several current and former Republican senators, and Supreme Court Justices Clarence Thomas and Antonin Scalia. Dick Cheney once owned a McLean townhouse—until he sold it to Bush's 2000 campaign manager, Joe Allbaugh. Less well-known are the countless lobbyists, lawyers, and businessmen whose names rarely turn up in *The Washington Post* and who like it that way—people like super-lobbyist Ken Duberstein, Ronald Reagan's former chief of staff; Frank Carlucci, former chair of the Carlyle Group, the notorious global private equity firm with close ties to the Bush family; and Dwight Schar, a construction mogul who is currently finance chairman of the Republican National Committee.

These people live in a leafy suburb among landmarks that neatly represent the modern GOP era: McLean Bible Church, a holy destination for GOP senators and Bush aides; the storied Saudi Arabian ambassador's personal compound; and the forbidden palace of CIA headquarters. ("Never accidentally turn in," Edwina cautions. Legend has it that many an illegal-immigrant housekeeper who did has never been seen again.) When Bush rushed to open a presidential transition office during the 2000 Florida

The McLean A-List >> COLIN POWELL . . . KEN DUBERSTEIN . . . NEWT GINGRICH . . . LIZ CHENEY . . . MEL MARTINEZ . . . FRED THOMPSON . . .

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recount, Cheney had his daughter scout out locations in McLean, and it was from there that the Bush team would lay its symbolic claim to the White House.

Conventional wisdom has been slow to assimilate this new reality. In the parlance of Beltway-bashing populists, "Georgetown" is the sneering shorthand used to describe Washington's clueless, cosseted elites. That shorthand, however, reveals how little these critics really understand contemporary Washington. Georgetown—and the establishment that resided there—faded from importance long ago. Over the last decade of growing Republican dominance in the capital, a new establishment has risen up to replace it. In a sense, McLean is the new Georgetown.

As Jimmy Carter's national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski faced down the Soviet Empire with nerves of steel. As he discusses what's become of his neighborhood, however, the 25-year McLean resident seems at wit's end. "When I moved in, there were more or less fields as my neighbors," Brzezinski explains in his sharp, no-nonsense cadence. "I had a barn, my kids had three horses, and they would go riding in the vicinity." Those were days when McLean was a pastoral refuge from the hectic capital. The Kennedy boys played touch football on the lawn of Hickory Hill, Ethel Kennedy's estate just off McLean's Route 123. And, perhaps a mile from what is now Surry Hill, Gore Vidal and his half-stepsister Jackie Bouvier frolicked around Merrywood, the bucolic 46-acre riverside home of Jackie's stepfather, Hugh Auchincloss. To this day, McLean lacks a proper downtown.

But the houses! "The vicinity is dominated by these ... McMansions," harrumphs the 78-year-old Brzezinski of the multimillion-dollar homes that are "pretentious, pompous, much too large for the typical family of two adults and one child—plus the requisite visiting divorce lawyer." Most galling to this former Harvard professor are what he sees as touches of fake class. Those despised McMansions are "totally phony, in that they imitate European aristocratic mansions, chateaus, and castles," he grouses. "The height of absurdity being reached by some that were clearly designed for northern Europe, with spires and roofs to deal with the snowfalls, but these are now located on postage-stamp lots in semi-tropical Northern Virginia." The biggest culprits of all, Brzezinski says, are the posh gated communities and "exclusive" developments. "If you just drive around, you will see one development after another with absolutely phony names, evoking some connection with British aristocracy—or Irish aristocracy—and now increasing Francophone tones: *Le Reserve*," he hisses.

If Brzezinski is a bit ornery, it may be because he's one of the few McLean residents who can recall life in old Georgetown. Soon after coming to Washington in 1977, Brzezinski lived briefly in the N Street home of legendary Georgetown hostess Pamela Harriman and her statesman husband, Averell—and for years after, he became a regular at elite Georgetown dinner parties. The Georgetown salon set didn't need to make money; they already had it. They were drawn to Washington by a mandarin's fascination with power and by a Skull and Bones–ian spirit of *noblesse oblige*. Even their architectural aesthetic befitted a class with nothing to prove. They generally lived in nineteenth-century townhouses that were cramped and even shabby. Dining rooms were small, lending an intimate quality to the salon atmosphere, and no one had to worry about driving home. Hostesses like Susan Mary Alsop, Harriman, and, later, Katharine Graham brought together policy wonks, socialites, intellectuals, and political operatives for nights of boozy, freewheeling conversation. Throw in its collection of French restaurants and antique shops and, to a crowd that hailed from blue-blood Northeastern cities like Boston and New York, Georgetown looked and felt like home. To this day, says one prominent Washington journalist, people in Georgetown "hate the idea of commerce driving social affairs. No one cares how much you make—they care about what you do."

The Georgetown era began to fade in the 1990s, hastened by the demise of the Democratic Congress in the 1994 elections. Harriman died three years later. And six months after Bush's 2001 inauguration, so did Graham. No true successors ever emerged. Today, many of Georgetown's best-known residents are media luminaries like George Stephanopoulos, Maureen Dowd, and Bob Woodward—none well-known for their entertaining. One of the few remaining power hosts in Georgetown happens to be a Republican, C. Boyden Gray (whose mansion was memorialized as the site of a cocktail party scene in the movie *Traffic*); but Gray, it's worth noting, is a Harvard-educated patrician who may have more in common with Averell Harriman than with Ed Rogers. "The whole Georgetown liberal inner sanctum, I just don't think that exists anymore," says Sally Quinn. "That whole little social class has just disappeared."

In recent years, a new one has replaced it. Beyond their cultural preference for the suburbs, Washington's cadre of movement conservatives had no interest in joining the Georgetown set—they had come to Washington to defeat it. Certainly, these post-Reagan conservatives—many from the South and the Sunbelt—hailed from a different class. Edwina Rogers, for instance, grew up in the rural Alabama town of Wetumpka. ("Dirt road, no telephone.") Ed is from Birmingham. (They met when she was a University of Alabama law student and he was working for the 1984 Reagan campaign.) As Edwina explained it, "Georgetown is more for the social elite, the intellectual elite. The people in McLean are more from humble backgrounds, state universities, not coming in from Yale or Harvard. It's middle-American nouveau riche."

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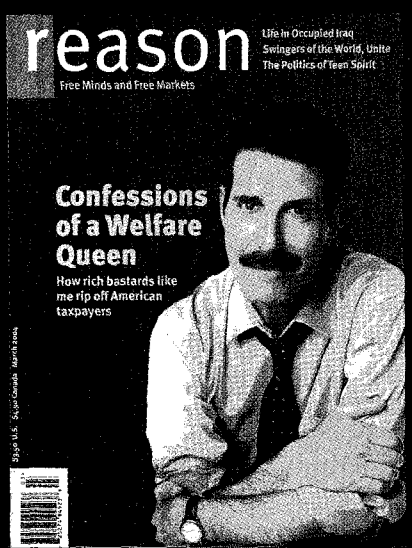
"My definition of a free society is a society where it is safe to be unpopular."
— Adlai Stevenson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Indeed, the migration of power from Georgetown to McLean represents the shift in American politics in microcosm. The Northeastern liberal elite drawn to the urbane sophistication of Georgetown has receded. In its place has risen a new conservative striver class—more likely to have grown up in Texas (or, as with the Rogerses, Alabama)—that has set itself up as landed gentry across the Potomac River in McLean.

But it's not merely political power that has accumulated in GOP circles over the last decade-plus. It's also money. The modern Republican brand of corporate conservatism, embodied in the capital by Tom DeLay's K Street Project, cultivated a climate of unprecedented access—and therefore profit—for lobbyists. If the Jack Abramoff and Duke Cunningham scandals didn't tell you everything you need to know, consider some statistics: Between 2000 and 2005, the number of registered Washington lobbyists doubled to about 35,000—and overall spending on lobbying grew by 30 percent, to $2.1 billion. A well-connected congressional aide can easily win a $300,000 starting salary on K Street. When John Boehner became House majority leader last winter, watchdog groups pointed out that a whopping 14 of his former aides had gone on to K Street lobbying jobs. Meanwhile, where it was once considered tacky for former members of Congress to lobby, they now routinely cash in their access and know-how for seven-figure earnings. In Washington, the spirit of public service has been overtaken by the profit motive.

Much of that profit has followed the maturing conservative establishment into McLean. "You're seeing now what I call the Gingrich Republicans, the revolutionaries—all the staffers are in their early forties now, and they're married; they're moving off Capitol Hill," says one former House GOP aide-turned-lobbyist. "And they're deciding, OK, where am I going to be for the next 20 years. And, three-to-one, people move to McLean." That helps to explain why McLean's median income is among the highest in the country—topping such ritzy enclaves as Greenwich, Highland Park, and Malibu.

As incomes have risen, so have real-estate prices. Last year, the average price for a McLean home was $905,622—more than twice that in nearby Alexandria, Virginia. One property with the name of "Tall Oaks" was listed earlier this year for $7.2 million. *Washington Life* magazine described Tall Oaks as "an exquisite fenced and gated estate sited on 4.3 rolling acres," capped by a 15,000-square-foot house featuring "[c]ast stone porches, slate and copper roof surfaces, mahogany wood doors, and French casement windows." Another $7 million home is touted by one realtor as "the ultimate haute couture estate, ... combining Jeffersonian authenticity [with] Versailles opulence."

Such price tags may be aimed mainly at McLean's booming CEO class, which includes the likes of home-builder Joe Robert, AOL co-founder Jim Kimsey, and former AOL Chairman Steve Case. But plenty of its well-heeled Republicans can spend several million dollars with ease. Earlier this year, for instance, former Oklahoma Senator Don Nickles, who retired last year to found his own lobbying firm, the Nickles Group, dropped $2.7 million for what *Washingtonian* magazine described as "a five-bedroom, seven-bathroom Colonial" with "a conservatory, media room, and gourmet kitchen with a wine refrigerator." And Spencer Abraham, who stepped down as energy secretary last year and promptly opened a "strategic consulting" firm, recently purchased an eight-bedroom home with, according to *Washington Life*, "an astounding eleven bathrooms, maid's quarters, swimming pool and pool house."

— ***For Sale*** —

"A prominent five-acre estate with approximately 25,000 square feet in McLean, Virginia, only minutes from the Nation's Capital. The residence includes nine bedrooms, twelve full baths, five half baths, ample staff quarters, an elevator, six-bay garage (two of which accommodate limousines), designer marble and onyx and eight fireplaces. This is a very powerful home that exceeds all expectation. Truly a one-of-a-kind custom-built masterpiece. $16,500,000."

—*From a Real Estate Section ad in the Wall Street Journal*

Of course, the true McLean titan isn't content to move into someone else's house. He tears it down and rebuilds it to far more epic specifications. The "dream house" business is booming, explains Larry Weinberg of McLean-based Bowa Builders. Weinberg's customers expect the very latest in custom-home accoutrements—from "distributed audio-video throughout the house" to outdoor fireplaces and computerized lighting systems that can cost thousands. "We're seeing much more elaborate pools and spas," he adds.

"There's definitely more money in Washington than there was twenty or thirty years ago," agrees Fred Malek, a venture capitalist and Bush family intimate who managed George H.W. Bush's 1992 presidential campaign and co-owned the Texas Rangers with George W. Bush. But Malek, who has lived in McLean since 1969, contends that people like Brzezinski overstate its gilding: "I see a lot of families with kids, greenery. It's a wonderfully close-in suburb that offers an island of tranquility in a sea of turbulence."

Of course, it's natural to have that view when you live, as Malek does, on Crest Lane, among some of McLean's poshest homes. One property here, said to have been rented by Queen Noor of Jordan, listed in 2003 for $11.5 million. A realtor's brochure describes it as "a spectacular estate," which "curves dramatically on the top of a hill. ... Watch the American eagles glide by!" Other Crest Lane residents include governor-turned-lobbyist Frank Keating and Richard Darman, a former Reagan official who is now a senior figure at the Carlyle Group.

Malek's house lies at the end of a long arching driveway

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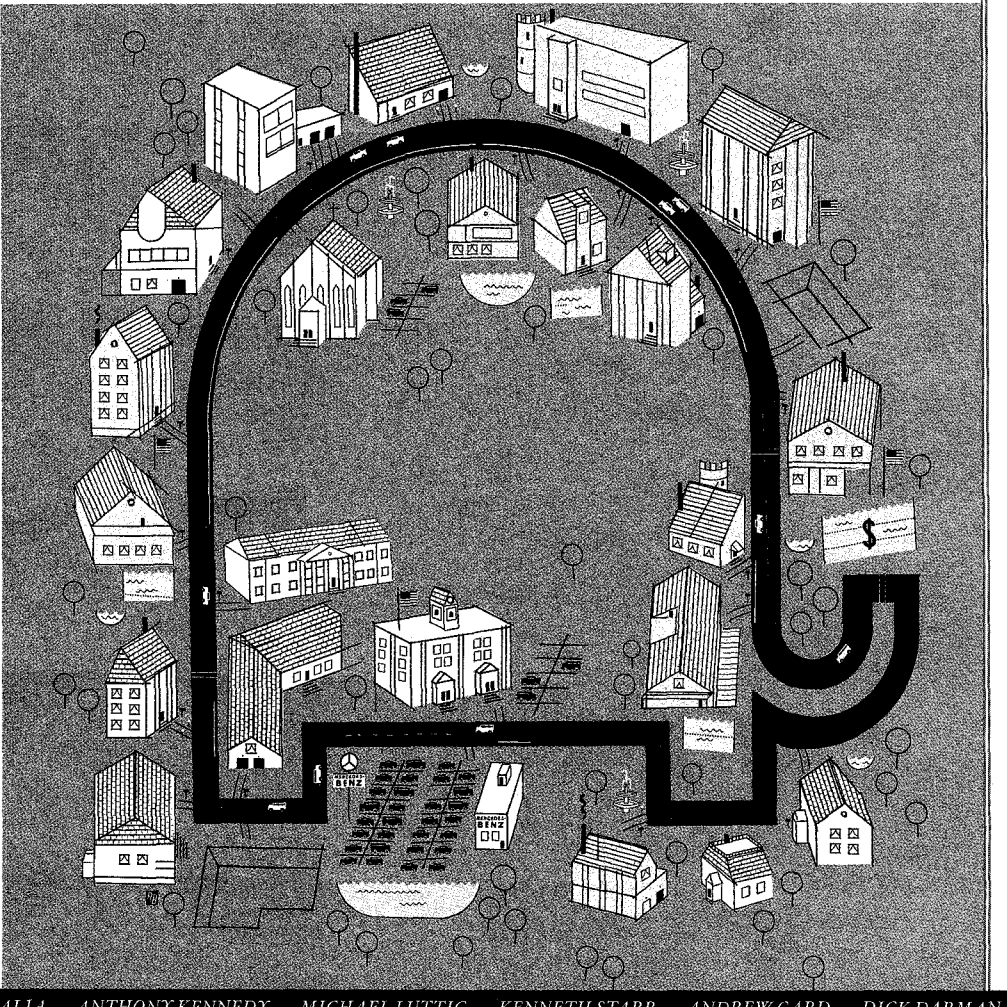
that passes lush gardens. On a recent morning, he sat in his living room filled with antique furniture, a gigantic fireplace, and a stunning view of the Potomac churning over rocks below. "It's pretty nice," he said matter-of-factly.

Malek sat and chatted about life in McLean for a while. Then the phone rang. He took the call and returned a few minutes later. "One of my airplane's engines had a problem. That was the mechanic. Fixed."

LAST MAY, not far from Malek's house at the Saudi Arabian ambassador's compound, Prince Turki Al Faisal, the Saudi kingdom's new emissary to the United States, hosted a gala party. The scene, according to the descriptions of those who attended, was straight out of the film *Syriana*. White drapes and soft lighting lent the compound's pool house a dreamy atmosphere for the gathering of a few hundred of Washington's biggest names in politics and media: Dick Cheney, Colin Powell, George Tenet, Paul Wolfowitz, Bob Woodward, Ted Koppel, John Negroponte, Syrian ambassador to the United States Imad Moustapha, and TV-hollerer John McLaughlin, who pulled up in a silver Porsche. The enormous compound—with a 38-room main house, 12-bedroom staff house, tennis court, and guard house at its front gate—has long been the scene of Washington intrigue. Its last occupant, Saudi Prince Bandar bin Sultan, used to informally host visitors like *New York Times* reporter Judith Miller and Tenet, who sometimes stopped off for a drink on his way home from CIA headquarters. Faisal's gala didn't run late—"there was no alcohol," complains one attendee (unlike the more hedonistic Bandar, Turki forbids booze). But his obvious purpose of stroking Washington's power elite had been served.

In the new McLean, socializing and lobbying are one and the same. An enormous amount of conservative hobnobbing is organized around fund-raisers or lobbyist-subsidized entertainment. Malek and his wife, Marlene, have hosted fund-raisers for Arnold Schwarzenegger, Olympia Snowe, George Allen, George Pataki, Arlen Specter, and George W. Bush. And events like Turki's, designed to win favor and influence, are conducted on a massive scale. A notice in *The Hill* for last September's installment of GOP lobbyist Tim Rupli's annual Pig Pickin' party expected around 500 guests, including several senior Capitol Hill staffers, who could enjoy a honky-tonk band and the roasting of three hogs. Alcohol was provided gratis by the DC-based wine and beer wholesalers' associations. Indeed, the closest thing to an intimate Georgetown salon one can find in McLean may be regular dinners—including annual seder meals—hosted by Bush foreign policy aide Elliott Abrams and attended by such fellow neoconservatives as Bill Kristol and Paul Wolfowitz.

In this crowded field, Edwina Rogers holds her own, hosting as many as 400 guests at what she says are mainly fund-raisers for local arts and community groups. "My house is like a banquet hall," says Ed. "We've had every kind of McLean fund-raiser." But they can throw a power party, too. One 2003 gathering for former National Economic Council chief Lawrence Lindsey, under whom Edwina worked for a time, drew the likes of Alan Greenspan, former Commerce Secretary Don Evans (then a McLean resident), and—are you ready for this, Joe Wilson?—Robert Novak, Scooter



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Libby, *and* Karl Rove.

The lobbying simply never stops in McLean. Even landing your children in the right school is a matter of getting access to the people with influence. McLean's public schools are excellent, including Langley High, where average SAT scores approach 1200. But Edwina is determined to see her two children admitted to McLean's private K–12 Potomac School, an 87-acre campus with a $22,000 tuition tag. And the lobbying for her small children has already begun. "We're calling Terry [McAuliffe], we're calling Dick Darman, saying, 'Can you help us get in?' " she says.

That may not be so different from the anxiety of any well-meaning suburban mom. But, in a town where a fair share of parents have experience lobbying congressmen and foreign governments, looking out for their children can be intense, and there is expensive competition over the smallest things. Consider an annual custom at McLean's Country Day preschool: Every year, Country Day holds an auction for the right to rename the small private drive that runs through its bucolic grounds. The bidding can be fierce. This year, the Rogerses squared off with developer Joe Robert. (Robert lives in a gated compound on the same dead-end lane as Colin Powell.) Edwina was determined that the lane be named after her daughter, Sabra. This was a matter of simple fairness: The previous year, the Rogerses had won the honor for their son, Haley (who is named after Ed's former lobbying partner and now Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour). The Rogers-Robert bidding war wound up ballooning into the five figures. But, today, the sign in the school's driveway reads SABRA LANE.

— *For Sale* —

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—Listing from McLean-based Weichert Realtors

THE GEORGETOWN OF old was clubby, but it was not highly partisan; its heyday coincided with the era of postwar political consensus. The culture of McLean, by contrast, seems built around a politicized Republican identity. Just ask Terry McAuliffe, one of the few prominent Democrats there. (Not shocking in McAuliffe's case, given that, as a millionaire former business mogul and golf enthusiast, he is perhaps Washington's most culturally Republican Democrat. He also arrived in McLean in 1991, during a less conservative era.) "When we got out here, it was like animals in the zoo—'Guess who's moved into the neighborhood?' " jokes the former Democratic Party chairman. McAuliffe was once stopped at a red light in the middle of town when a stranger got out of his car and berated his politics. During Mark Warner's 2001 gubernatorial campaign, McAuliffe planted a large WARNER FOR GOVERNOR sign on his lawn. "Every couple of nights someone would come out after one or two in the morning and spray-paint all kinds of awful things." Each time, McAuliffe would replace the sign with a fresh one. "This went on no less than fifteen times!"

GOP graffiti artists were likely less brazen in decades past, when McLean had a more Democratic veneer. Ted Kennedy lived for years on McLean's Chain Bridge Road, next door to the Saudi compound. But, in 1997, he sold his house and decamped to Washington's Kalorama neighborhood. Ethel Kennedy put her Hickory Hill estate on the market for $25 million three years ago. (Though it has since been reduced to a mere $16.5 million, the problem being not the Kennedy name but rather that, by McLean standards, the historic house is rather shabby. "You literally have to put five to ten [million] into it," says one neighbor.) And the magical Merrywood estate where Jackie Bouvier frolicked as a girl? In a perfectly fitting symbol of McLean's larger transformation, it was purchased in 1999 by Carlyle Group executive William Conway. (Conway later sold it to AOL's Steve Case for $24.5 million.)

Nowadays, it's rare to spot a famous Democrat around McLean (although some remain, including House baron John Dingell and Senators Patrick Leahy and Byron Dorgan). By contrast, there's a "Where's Waldo" quality to the frequent sightings of big-name Republicans: It's not at all uncommon to see Newt Gingrich pulling into Crown Books in his white SUV, Colin Powell buying shampoo at the CVS, or Dick Cheney purchasing 10EEE shoes at Johnston & Murphy (all actual sightings). McAuliffe recounts a recent Little League soccer game his daughter played with Liz Cheney's children. It was a peaceful Saturday morning, and McAuliffe was chatting with the vice president's daughter, who, naturally, lives in McLean, when he suddenly noticed a large motorcade roll into the parking lot. "Lo and behold, who comes down the hill? Dick Cheney!" After Cheney did what McAuliffe describes as a "double-take," the two awkwardly slogged their way through some cordial chit-chat.

Even churchgoing has a political cast in McLean. Worshippers at Trinity United Methodist Church, just off McLean's main drag, listen to sermons from pastor Kathleene Card, wife of former White House Chief of Staff Andy Card. (The church's signage recently advertised a somewhat belated sermon on CHRISTIANITY & WORLD RELIGIONS: UNDERSTANDING ISLAM.) For evangelicals, there is McLean Bible Church, a $90 million complex that seats 2,400 parishioners. ("The Wal-Mart of churches," one former church employee told the *Post* in 2004.) McLean Bible

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is led by the crusading Reverend Lon Solomon, who preaches a particularly doctrinaire and conservative gospel with the aid of elaborate mood lighting, 92 speakers, and the occasional fog machine. Solomon has attracted such prominent Republicans as Kenneth Starr, Dan Coats, Don Nickles, Don Evans, Senator John Thune, Senator Elizabeth Dole, and a clique of young Bush White House staffers. "It's really because of Lon Solomon that I go," the conservative Oklahoma Senator Jim Inhofe, who sometimes takes notes during Solomon's sermons, told the *Post*. "He does things that many others don't do. He's not afraid to say things and talk about political issues. He's very pro-life and strong on opposing homosexual [marriage]." In one sermon during the Clinton impeachment, Solomon reportedly issued a thinly veiled Clinton-bashing spiel about how lying to the American people is wrong. That would be little surprise, given that Solomon is close to Ken Starr, to whom he sent encouraging personal notes during the Clinton inquisition. Perhaps because of Solomon's fearless mixing of religion and politics, McLean Bible is a networking hub for young Washington conservatives, and many a GOP power couple has formed there. One McLean lobbyist, a former aide to Senator Phil Gramm named Jay Velasquez, told *Roll Call* that he met his future wife in the church's lobby when she complimented his cowboy boots.

McLean's schools also reflect the political culture. The *Post* recently said of the Potomac School—attended by two of Dick Cheney's grandchildren—that "students who speak favorably of President Bush might be less likely to be hazed than at, say, Sidwell Friends," Chelsea Clinton's alma mater. Langley High, meanwhile, holds an annual day of mock Supreme Court arguments, which Ken Starr has overseen at least four times. Antonin Scalia, who has sent seven of his children to Langley, personally chose last school year's winner.

IN HIS 1995 memoir, *Palimpsest*, Gore Vidal recalls the time he spent as a boy at Merrywood. In his childhood, he writes, the estate was an idyllic, pastoral place: "a mock-Georgian brick house set among some forty acres of woods on the high Potomac palisades. From terraced lawns, there was a steep rocky drop to the river." At the time, McLean was still a quiet refuge, and the Georgetown establishment was just beginning to emerge in earnest. Decades later, in the mid-'90s, Vidal returned to Merrywood for a BBC documentary on his life. He was startled by the changed landscape. "[N]ew houses everywhere," he observed, somewhat haughtily:

> The original forty acres have dwindled to five or six. The new owner—a real estate developer—has completely redone what was a rather chaste house in the Georgian style. Two wings have been added, and a turret sprouts mysteriously on the roof. ... The interior is like a Las Vegas casino. Artworks of great singularity clutter expensive rooms. A ceramic near-life-size giraffe dominates a new end room. Also on view: dozens of heavy silver-framed portraits of Reagan and Bush and other Republicans to whom the owner has contributed some of the money their regime made it possible for him to make.... [I]t would have been far cheaper for the owner to build himself a Las Vegas casino rather than to wreck so deliberately and elaborately what was, in the words of Virginia's senator [John Warner], 'a historic house.' An embroidered pillow says, BETTER NOUVEAU RICH THAN NOT RICH. ...
>
> There is now a swimming pool near the house. Beside the pool, the gilded necks and heads of two giant plaster horses emerge from the earth like Pluto's chariot, surging upward from Hades in pursuit of Persephone and the spring of the year—to put a classical gloss on all this horror. In front of the house, a half-dozen life-size plaster sheep, painted brown and white, await a plaster shepherd. If the 1 percent that own the country spend their money in this way. ...

Vidal does not complete the thought; there is no need. The whole of McLean completes it for him. McLean's housing boom has left virtually no unclaimed or unspoiled land here—a large housing development now under construction off its main drag may be the last of its kind. But one oasis does remain in the midst of all McLean's wealth and power. It is a green patch of land virtually across the street from Ethel Kennedy's Hickory Hill estate. On a recent afternoon, Edwina Rogers pulled her silver Jaguar alongside it. The untended grass had grown long, and tree boughs drooped lazily overhead, scattering golden sunlight, and, for a moment, one could almost imagine the horses that might have peacefully wandered here decades ago. This pristine property is owned by Vice President Dick Cheney. When he is finished with government service, locals expect him to develop this land and to return, where he belongs, here in McLean.■

AMES BAKER IV . . . LINCOLN CHAFEE . . . CHUCK HAGEL . . . DAVID GERGEN

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Conjurings

THE PEOPLE WHO MADE **THE ILLUSIONIST** presumably did not set out to jog contemporary judgment, but in a very pleasant way they have done it. For several centuries a prime critical criterion has been appraisal of a work's theme. Narrative or drama might be sound enough as such; but, we asked, what was the work's underlying theme?

Certainly that criterion still opens the most deeply rewarding aspects of many works, but *The Illusionist* reminds us that it is not always essential—that a good story, without much thematic resonance, can be enough. Legend tells us that when the crowd gathered at the New York dock in 1840 to greet the ship bringing the next magazine installment of *The Old Curiosity Shop*, they didn't call to the crew, "Is the theme developing?" They called, "Is Little Nell dead?" *The Illusionist* has been made for the crowd on that dock, of whom in this case I am one.

The screenplay, based on a short story by Steven Millhauser, was written by Neil Burger, who also directed. The place is Vienna in 1900. An illusionist—we would call him a magician, except that he is much more mysterious—is having great success; his theater is packed. A flashback shows us his boyhood encounter with an old illusionist in the country, though we don't see how he acquires the old man's powers. The boy, named Eisenheim, is the son of a cabinetmaker, and he accidentally meets Sophie, an aristocratic girl of his own age. They become childhood sweethearts, but her family soon parts them.

Years later they meet again when he is performing in Vienna and she is betrothed to the Crown Prince Leopold. (The prince is the story's invention: the emperor, Franz Josef, had only one son, Rudolf, who died—possibly a suicide—in 1889. Leopold was needed for the plot, so he was created.) He is vain and cruel, and when he discovers Sophie's re-awakened interest in Eisenheim, he takes steps to quash it.

He justifies his actions further: because Eisenheim gives the public some awareness of manipulation, along with an appetite for inquiry and substance, Leopold sees the illusionist as a threat to the monarchy. When Eisenheim's performance expands to involve the summoning of dead people, the prince is further incensed, because Eisenheim seems to be intruding on religious propriety. The story becomes a sort of contest between Leopold's material powers and Eisenheim's abstract ones.

Most of the above is seen through the eyes of Chief Inspector Uhl, a police official who is both close to the prince and fascinated by Eisenheim. Uhl is a man whose wry cynicism touches everything with what we might want to think of as fin-de-siècle Viennese worldliness. (At one point when he and Eisenheim quarrel, the illusionist fumes, "Are you completely corrupt?" Blandly Uhl replies, "Not completely.")

At the finish Uhl adjusts the whole film for us. As far as we have seen, the story ends sadly. But Uhl perceives that underneath the apparent ending there is possibly a completely different ending, which, helped by a few flashbacks, he composes.

The performances themselves are as rewarding as the story, thus obviously they strengthen it. Paul Giamatti plays Uhl. Seen lately in *Sideways*, in which he was a dissatisfied Californian, he gives this period role solidity and flavor, creating the sort of tacitly amused character that Peter Ustinov used to make enjoyable. Watching *Sideways*, many viewers, including me, cracked about Giamatti's success despite his undistinguished face. Fully bearded here and nestled in a role that makes no romantic demands, Giamatti delights, face and all.

The role of Leopold is relished by the English actor Rufus Sewell, who understands villainy as a venerable theater mode and makes the most of it. Sophie is played by Jessica Biel, who is enchanting. She has the sort of features—if it *is* a sort—that are not conventionally beautiful but bespeak beauty. The quality of her acting matches that response.

Eisenheim is Edward Norton, who continues to amaze. Only ten years ago he made his screen debut in *Primal Fear*, in which he played a street-smart hood. He was good in it and left us feeling that one more usable vernacular actor had been rounded up. Since then he has played, among others, a wimp helped by pugilism in *Fight Club*, a singing role in *Everyone Says I Love You*, and the cheery cowboy-obsessed nut in *Down in the Valley*. The difference in his performance here is not merely a matter of clothes and accent. Norton has found the core of Eisenheim and has built outward—with exactly the right stature and distinction. It is genuine acting, admirable, and it predicts more of such acting to come.

The costumes by Ngila Dickson are the kind that make us think we are feeling the texture of all those wonderful materials. The film was shot, for the most part, in Prague, whose old streets and buildings are deployed in seductive color and light by Dick Pope, the cinematographer who did *Topsy-Turvy* and *Vera Drake*. A surprise is the music by the modernist Philip Glass, who accepts the intent of the film and scores it to suit.

Neil Burger's directing is exceptional even on the periphery—his selection of extras. (We see many in public places, in theater audiences.) Every face we see has some interest, some individuality, and has a verifying effect on the whole. More centrally, Burger's handling of movement is fluent, original without a trace of the freaky. (He does have a passion for feet; we often see feet in motion—even hors-

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es' hooves.) More subtly, he understood what he needed from his actors to make this story absorbing. This is Burger's second feature, and he is one more reason not to be depressed about American film.

Much is being said about this picture's thematic investigation of credulity, of the exercise of power. These comments seem to me possibly tolerable but superfluous. What Burger and his colleagues have done is to entrance us with a richly acted, beautifully produced story. ■

JENNIFER HOMANS ON DANCE
The Little Apple

THERE ARE MANY REASONS to mourn for the ballet in New York City, but the most immediate and devastating is the recent death of Melissa Hayden, an extraordinary ballerina. Her life and career belong to the glorious age of classical ballet in New York: she danced with American Ballet Theater and with George Balanchine's New York City Ballet in their early years, and went on to perform principal roles with City Ballet for more than twenty years until retiring from the stage in 1973. She spent the next thirty-three years coaching and training dancers. A charismatic and fiercely independent dancer and teacher, Hayden never subscribed to any "school" or "style" of dance. In a company that rigorously eschewed the "star system," she was an international star, and on her own terms.

THE DIAMOND PROJECT
(New York City Ballet)

CINDERELLA
(American Ballet Theater)

CINDERELLA
(Carolina Ballet)

INVOLUTION
(James Sewell Ballet)

Born Mildred Herman in 1923 to Russian-Jewish parents in Toronto, she was an iconoclastic dancer from the start. Hayden did not fit comfortably into the geometrically proportioned positions of classical dance. Her body was "difficult" and unballetic: compact and angular, with short legs, a long torso, and an unusually wide back and ribcage. Yet she turned these shortcomings to advantage and became perhaps the most lucid dancer of her generation. An individualist whose talent and tastes defied conventional boundaries, Hayden reveled in technical bravura and stark modernism but also delivered passionate renderings of dramatic ballets. She adored the nineteenth-century classics *and* Martha Graham.

This breadth and depth of artistic experience, tempered by straight-talking candor and an avid, irrepressible energy and sharp wit, also made Hayden a superb teacher. Soon after she left the stage, she opened a dance studio in New York. I studied with her there (and elsewhere) for many years. Her classes were tough, disciplined, and hugely gratifying. Each step was turned through an angle, analyzed, dissected. And the point was never formal perfection for its own sake. For Hayden, ballet was not just a sequence of steps to master: it was a body of knowledge to be interrogated, interpreted—and celebrated. Physical and intellectual rigor opened out onto the pure sensual joy of movement and music. "Pretty, very pretty," she would quip, "but not the truth. If you're not honest, sweetheart, they won't believe a step of it."

In 1983, Hayden left New York to teach at the North Carolina School of the Arts. The loss to the city and its dancers was incalculable. She had the strength of character to shift the ground under an art form, and we shall never know what impact she might have had if she had been made readily available to the performers of City Ballet and Ballet Theater over the past two decades. Today, as we watch ballet descend into sickly pieties and terminal athleticism, her irreverent and full-hearted classicism remains a beacon.

THE MEMORY OF MELISSA HAYden brings the present into dispiriting focus. We are faced with the sad but incontrovertible fact that New York City is no longer at the forefront of classical ballet, and has not been for some time now. This is odd, since New York boasts two major ballet companies with strong classical traditions and a mission to create new work: New York City Ballet is dedicated to the legacy of George Balanchine and Jerome Robbins and to taking classicism into the future, while American Ballet Theater prides itself on curating the "classics" and commissioning new choreography. Both institutions attract world-class dancers, and no company in the country can rival them in size or resources. City Ballet in particular is quite wealthy, with budgetary flexibility (and executive salaries) that lend it corporate luster and make it the envy of other non-profit organizations. Artistically, however, the new ballet choreography on show at both of these houses is slick and superficial, and shows little empathy for the high ideals of classical ballet.

Consider City Ballet's **DIAMOND PROJECT**. Initiated by Peter Martins in 1992 to promote the creation of new dances within the classical idiom, the project has over the past fourteen years produced forty-seven ballets by twenty-six choreographers. This season saw no less than seven premieres by seven different artists from across Europe and America. Martins would seem to be opening the door to talent from around the world and promoting an exchange of ideas and new ways of thinking. But look closely: that is not at all what is happening. The Diamond Project is a Peter Martins production, and the work it showcases rarely deviates from the artistic vision he has set forth at City Ballet in recent years.

The Red Violin, Martins's own contribution to this season's Diamond Project, is perhaps the strongest statement so far of his aesthetic. Set to John Corigliano's melodramatic score, the ballet is an extended essay on partnering for two couples and four men. The men manipulate the women, wrap them in and around their own bodies, pull, push, twist, and contort their positions at every conceivable angle. The dancers tangle and disentangle. Both men and women are caged figures, entrapped in the logic of each step as they work to extricate themselves from unnecessarily complicated encounters. The space between them is collapsed in a crush of limbs, reducing any suggestion of decorum or civility to a crude anatomical equation. The four men charge on stage periodically and cut

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into sequences of academic steps as if to provide an escape from the imprisoning *pas de deux*.

This is not just tedious to watch: Martins's choreography radically undermines the ethics of classical ballet. His dancers are not individuals, but so many arms, legs, and torsos to be manipulated and tied in knots. There is no glint of intelligence or temperament. It hardly matters which way the dancers entwine and disentwine, since the movement has no animating purpose or idea. At the end of the piece, the men take the women at the waist and sling them violently into a suspended backbend just off the floor as the music hits a final chord. This is so self-consciously an "effect" that any dramatic impulse is rendered false and calculated.

These senseless feats are presented triumphantly, as an innovative style of bravura dancing. This is nonsense. The skill required for this kind of movement is crass and hard. Hiking up legs, distorting hips and ribs, turning from peculiar positions has nothing to do with the complicated coordination, musical sensitivity, and grace that defines great ballet. Indeed, the weakness that City Ballet's dancers consistently exhibit in performing Balanchine's rigorous works may have something to do with the way Martins asks them to move in his own overwrought concoctions. By erasing the poetry of the human body, he lowers technical standards and diminishes his dancers. There is little artistic challenge in the blank steps of *The Red Violin*. And this is one of Martins's more demanding works.

The other ballets in this year's Diamond Project did little to challenge this bleak aesthetic vision. *Slice to Sharp*, by the Finnish choreographer Jorma Elo (currently resident choreographer of the Boston Ballet), added insult to injury. To music by Biber and Vivaldi, the piece is one long rush of athleticism devoid of proportion, physical harmony, or human sensibility. Effect is piled onto effect; bodies are yanked, distorted, and flung across the stage for no apparent reason. The gratuitously fussy arm movements were meant to seem original, I suppose, but they are merely distracting. The dancers spin and whip to the finish with the bravura of circus performers. But their virtuosity is hollow, lacking in elegance or style. There is no pleasure here. The piece is just exhausting, and depressing in its eagerness to sacrifice integrity for a cheap thrill.

Christopher Wheeldon, by contrast, has genuine ideas. Unfortunately, his recent choreography has been distressingly uneven. Last year we had *After the Rain*, which had an extraordinarily beautiful and inventive *pas de deux*, attached to a truncated and strangely out of place *pas de six*. Now we have *Evenfall* to Bartók's Piano Concerto no. 3. Wheeldon, who is City Ballet's resident choreographer, successfully establishes an almost uncanny affinity between Bartók's score and a subdued but richly configured ballet aesthetic, with a romantic couple and ensemble in soft gray tutus. There are quiet reflective moments, expressed in a chaste classical style, and there are striking images, as when the corps de ballet wraps itself protectively around the woman (recalling *Swan Lake*). The program notes remind us that Bartók began the composition for his wife, but died before it was completed. All of this is tantalizingly thoughtful. Unfortunately, the ballet wanders and frays rather than fully engaging the poignant themes it sets out. And so genuine ideas devolve into a facile effect.

Wheeldon has the talent to transcend the limitations of City Ballet, so why does he so often succumb? His lapses can no longer be put down to youthful inexperience. He is now an established choreographer with a substantial body of work—too much of it undistinguished. In ballet after ballet, Wheeldon seems to fall just short, sheering off ideas before they are fully articulated. He circles his own talent, only rarely diving in to take its full measure. As such, he is fully representative of today's City Ballet, which persistently wears through artists without bringing their potential to fruition.

But the news from the Diamond Project was not all grim. Two works stood out. The first was *In Vento*, by the Italian choreographer Mauro Bigonzetti, to somewhat overworked music by Bruno Moretti. This ballet threatened to be a pretentious and darkly lit foray into pseudo-expressionism, but it was better than that—thanks to the dancers, and in particular to Maria Kowroski. In classical and Balanchine roles, Kowroski is stiff and brittle; she can do the steps but looks awkward and uncomfortable, as if corseted by some abiding notion of strict Victorian etiquette. Not here: in Bigonzetti's fluid, modern dance–tinged piece, her body gripped the movement, torso flexible and sensual, and she tore into intricate passages with abandon. She was *in* the movement, and pulling from the gut. For once, Kowroski was really dancing, and she elevated Bigonzetti's somewhat predictable choreography into a strong and honest statement.

Russian Seasons, by the Russian choreographer Alexei Ratmansky, was ambitious and substantive. In part, this was due to Ratmansky's choice of music: Leonid Desyatnikov's pulsating score draws directly from traditional Russian music and Orthodox forms and is a skillful and rhythmically interesting evocation of a mythic Russia, reminiscent of Stravinsky's *Les Noces*. Galina Solovyeva's cleanly cut costumes heightened the music's effect, hinting at bright Ballets Russes colors and styles. Pulling these traditions around it, the ballet opens out into a sensitive and playful exposition ranging across a panoply of Russian themes.

A Winter Night

after Tranströmer

The storm puts its mouth to the house
and blows to get a tone.
I toss and turn, my closed eyes
reading the storm's text.

The child's eyes grow wide in the dark
and the storm howls for him.
Both love the swinging lamps;
both are halfway towards speech.

The storm has the hands and wings of a child.
Far away, travellers run for cover.
The house feels its own constellation of nails
holding the walls together.

The night is calm in our rooms,
where the echoes of all footsteps
rest like sunken leaves in a pond,
but the night outside is wild.

A darker storm stands over the world.
It puts its mouth to our soul
and blows to get a tone. We are afraid
the storm will blow us empty.

ROBIN ROBERTSON

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There is no story, but each dance has a distinctive quality, and we are left with a mosaic of fragmented Russian memories. There are peasant-like movements, brutal dances, tender ceremonies, and sad departures. Familiar gestures and clever allusions ease the way: an eighteenth-century bow, a parodied minimalist phrase, a ritualized kiss. The movement is classically based, but often veers off in unexpected directions. The dancers fling and dart, as if the ballet vocabulary had been broken into shards and instantaneously repaired before our eyes—sometimes incompletely.

Some vignettes seemed contrived, but Ratmansky has taken on a big subject with impressive panache. Wendy Whelan was particularly convincing as a girl in white who performs a lyrical, insistent dance that never stops flowing until she falls to the ground. Her companions lift her and she dances again, but her center of gravity shifts suddenly downward, throwing the full thrust of her movement into the floor, leaden but supple. When we see her weeping in the corner, we don't have to know why: the weight and the tone of her dance are sufficient explanation. Ratmansky's poetic choreography stands in sharp contrast to Martins's prosaic and dehumanized athleticism. But Ratmansky, like Bigonzetti, is only a visitor in New York. Ostensibly ecumenical, the Diamond Project does little to change the artistic facts on the ground at City Ballet.

WHAT ABOUT American Ballet Theater? This season, the company's artistic director, Kevin McKenzie, invited James Kudelka to stage his production of **CINDERELLA**, first mounted by the National Ballet of Canada in 2004 and later performed by the Boston Ballet. McKenzie had seen the production in full regalia before he brought it to Ballet Theater. He knew exactly what he was getting. And so he has no excuse for dragging his dancers through this impostor of a ballet.

Kudelka shamelessly embraces every imaginable contemporary cliché: Cinderella has a "dysfunctional" suburban family, the stepsisters are spoiled rich kids engrossed in conspicuous consumption, her fairy godmother is a stodgy old dowager, the Prince is just a regular guy with a crown (pursued by a ubiquitous society-page photographer). There is no dead father, no magical ball by night, no being swept off her feet by true love. Kudelka reportedly hated the rags-to-riches idea, and focused instead on the theme of personal transformation: Cinderella and the prince "complete each other" and escape the corrupting influence of upward social mobility by retreating to domestic bliss at her hearth (yup, the same cinder hearth of her misbegotten suburban youth).

When the Prince embarks on his journey to find the owner of the lost slipper, he goes global, jet-setting through a series of locales where he encounters simpering Chinese, Scandinavians on skates, tourist-trap belly dancers, and so on. Kudelka may think this is all a big joke, but these ridiculous and boring dances are practically all we get. Indeed, the quality of the choreography in the entire production is abysmal. The Prince performs the obligatory bravura turns and leaps, but little else. The amorous *pas de deux* is a long ice-skating routine. Cinderella does endless skipping dances with brooms and mops, wasting what good there is in Prokofiev's score on hopscotch and impish jumps in bare feet. The production is superficial and insulting to anyone who knows or cares about this art.

It is hard to imagine what McKenzie was thinking. He is not a man without taste: in the same season Ballet Theater performed a magnificent *Giselle*. It was not a new production, but it looked gorgeous, and the full company deserves credit for making it work. The corps de ballet was pristine, the sets and the costumes were evocative but never distracting. In the performance I saw, Diana Vishneva and Vladimir Malakhov reminded us of just how powerful ballet can be. Striped of affect and ego, their bodies were welded to the music and the drama of the work. Each step was beautifully shaped and exquisitely phrased. The symmetry, the line, and the humid lilt of their *pas de deux* captured a tragic love, never spilling into romantic excess or sentimentality. Their discipline was absolute, every movement breathtakingly elevated by its formal precision. Malakhov in particular was extraordinary, his body taut with passion yet noble and restrained. From the moment he entered to his final collapse at Giselle's grave, his flawless technique pushed him to the brink of madness and destruction. It was a pitch-perfect performance.

If McKenzie can give us this superbly danced *Giselle*, what drew him to such a pompous and inane *Cinderella*? Partly, the explanation must be that McKenzie has a blind spot when it comes to commissioning new choreography: in recent years Ballet Theater has produced eminently forgettable ballets by sloppy or sentimental choreographers such as Stanton Welch, Trey McIntyre, and Lar Lubovitch, along with lavish but blindly pedantic versions of classics such as Anna-Marie Holmes's *Raymonda*. Even so, Kudelka's travesty of a *Cinderella* breaks new ground in bad taste.

THERE WERE OTHER OPTIONS. Carolina Ballet performed a new production of **CINDERELLA** this season in Raleigh, North Carolina. The company is directed by Robert Weiss, a choreographer and former City Ballet dancer who is one of the most accomplished artists working in ballet today. Weiss has a small troupe of thirty-one dancers, and so he scaled the grand story ballet down to a more personal chamber work. He chose not to use Prokofiev's epic music, but commissioned a new and lovely score by Karl Moraski, which is melodic and danceable. Moraski and Weiss worked together, fashioning the music programmatically to fit the action and the dances.

Weiss indulges in none of Kudelka's trendy shenanigans, but instead finds in *Cinderella* an intimate story of grief and love, lightened with comic touches. The ballet opens with a funeral procession, as Cinderella's father is taken to the grave and the young girl weeps, bereft. Her savior is the fairy godmother, who is not just a token of good luck but a principal ballerina in command of a starlit world of magic and fine dancing. She is the mother that Cinderella never had, and the story moves back and forth between her realm and the hearth, between the young girl's trying reality and her fanciful imagination. It is a simple conceit, and in Weiss's hands beautifully wrought. The choreography shows off the dancers in generous classical variations and a simple but touching *pas de deux*, along with many charming character dances. Unfortunately, Weiss did not have sufficient funding fully to orchestrate Moraski's music. Hearing it played on the piano undercuts the effectiveness of the production, but this did not seem to impair the dancers at all. Many of the principals and soloists were exceptional, and the entire cast danced with a vibrant and full-bodied musicality often missing from New York stages these days.

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Weiss is not the only thinking ballet choreographer in America today. In a very different key there is also James Sewell, director of the James Sewell Ballet based in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota. Sewell is daring and original, with a broad grounding in classical ballet and modern dance. In a program at the Joyce Theater in New York this spring, the company danced his *Involution*, to music by Thomas Newman. It is a work of sharp contrasts, of sunlight and nightmares. The dark moments are devastating: at one point, a dancer moves from yearning lyricism to crippling collapse as if the skeletal structure had secretly given way, causing the body to cave in suddenly, with unexpected speed and force. There were steps that seemed to break in all the wrong places—through the bone rather than at the joints—requiring the dancer to move in a precariously narrow range between technical control and physical anarchy.

The light sections of *Involution* were less convincing: too many lapses into sentimental yogic spirituality, the price perhaps of Sewell's willingness to unearth genuine emotions and grapple seriously with how ballet relates to more organic styles of movement. He knows how sanctimonious and prettified ballet can be, and in the past he has taken a sharp scalpel to this sugary image. Several years ago, he created *Barrage*, a wild ballet that was very funny—and very serious. Its deconstructionist agenda notwithstanding, *Barrage* was one of the best things I have seen in years: a hard-driving examination of its art that successfully combined images of pious neo-classicism, spliced film footage of Saddam Hussein, the choreographer's pregnant wife, and much more—all doubled and tripled back on itself and playing havoc with the audience's preconceived expectations of what a ballet should be.

HAVE WE REACHED THE POINT where the only sense in which New York is still a creative center for classical dance is that these artists—and a few others—come to visit? Even that is increasingly difficult and infrequent: for most troupes, performing in New York means a hefty financial loss. Weiss's company has never come to town; Sewell's troupe makes occasional stops. Even the major European companies seem to be skirting New York these days: the Kirov Ballet and the Royal Ballet chose to perform this spring at the Kennedy Center in Washington.

Yet New York *should* be at the forefront of new developments in ballet. No other city has its cultural vigor and vast dynamism. Many supporters of City Ballet and Ballet Theater argue that it is enough that they are stable and going about the business of safeguarding the classics and commissioning new work, even if the results are mixed. We are in a cultural trough, they say, and at least audiences are still buying tickets. But this begs the question: who is going to get us out of the trough? New choreography and imaginative productions are the lifeblood of ballet, and the formidable lapses in taste at City Ballet and Ballet Theater are distressing. Bombastic athleticism and empty spectacle are dead ends that threaten rather than extend the art form. New York's major ballet institutions are well along the path to decadence. If they do not change course, one day we may wake to find that the dance capital of the country has slipped quietly off the map. Perhaps it already has. ■

Christopher Benfey
Covering Her Century

SELECTED LETTERS OF MARTHA GELLHORN
Edited by Caroline Moorehead
(Henry Holt, 531 pp., $32.50)

WHATEVER ELSE SHE was—novelist, travel writer, celebrity wife, socialite—Martha Gellhorn was one of the greatest American war correspondents of her generation or any other. Through almost four decades, she covered in succession the Spanish Civil War, World War II, Vietnam, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the civil wars in El Salvador and Nicaragua, along with related skirmishes and horrors from Helsinki to Hong Kong. She was in Barcelona in November 1938—"perfect bombing weather," she noted dryly—as Franco's planes closed in. She was at Dachau when news came of the German surrender; she found it "the most suitable place in Europe to hear the news of victory." In 1994, four years before her death at the age of eighty-nine, Gellhorn was in Brazil, writing about the violent deaths of street children there. Fearless and attentive, with a quick eye for the heartbreaking detail, she had the perfect temperament for a war reporter. "I never really found my own private disorderly place in the world except in the general chaos of war," she wrote to a friend in 1960, when she and the twentieth century still had plenty of war to go.

Gellhorn's distinctive voice fused two major strands of American reportage: the WPA-inspired documentation of the suffering of ordinary folk during the Depression, and the hard-boiled ironic take on war of American reporters from Stephen Crane to Ernest Hemingway. Gellhorn's four years of marriage to Hemingway, during the initial phase of his long decline, bolstered her fame while diminishing (at least among his legions of admirers) her status as a writer. He told anyone who would listen what a bitch and a phony she was. She, for her part, resented being reduced to "a footnote in history, a passing reference in others' books and letters," though she maintained a dignified public silence. Now that we have a generous selection of her letters, assembled by her biographer, Caroline Moorehead, we can piece together her account of the marriage. She left him because he was a crybaby and got in the way of her work.

LIKE SO MANY NOMADS OF HER generation, Martha Gellhorn was a child of the Midwest who wanted out. She was born in St. Louis in 1908. Her father, the son of a Breslau merchant, was a gynecologist and obstetrician who specialized in treating syphilis; her mother, a St. Louis native, campaigned for women's suffrage.

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Both were half-Jewish. Dismayed by the educational options for their three children, they helped to found a progressive school in St. Louis named for the nature writer John Burroughs. Martha went from Burroughs to Bryn Mawr, didn't like it, and left to become a cub reporter for a newspaper in Albany. She covered women's clubs for six months, didn't like it, and headed for Europe with two suitcases, a typewriter, and $75.

Gellhorn's first brush with love was pure Henry James. In 1930, floating among odd jobs in Paris, she met a sophisticated, charming, and married journalist named Bertrand de Jouvenel. Half-Jewish like Gellhorn, Jouvenel drifted during the 1930s between anti-liberal positions on the left and right; and after the war he emerged as a significant political theorist, best known for works such as *On Power*, which analyzed the growth of the modern state as a threat to individual liberty. He was twenty-six when he met Gellhorn; ten years earlier he had been seduced by his stepmother, the writer Colette. (Gellhorn could read all about it in *Chéri*.) Bertrand and Martha considered themselves married, but the city of St. Louis, where they sought refuge, did not agree. Neither did Jouvenel's wife, who refused a divorce. In 1931, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* funded Gellhorn's travels through the Southwest, as recorded in a series of letters to Stanley Pennell, her English teacher at Burroughs and later the author of the superb Gettysburg novel *The History of Rose Hanks*. She wrote to Jouvenel from the highway in California, where her platinum-colored Dodge, bought for $25, had broken down: "I've repaid ardor with impatience and sponged your assurance with icy water ... forget me—I'm a shit face; and make yourself realize again what you knew before I came. I'll write from Carmel."

The affair, like the Dodge, limped on for another three years—through faked orgasms, two abortions, and, in 1933, an encounter with Colette herself. "What impressed me," Gellhorn wrote, "was to come in and find her writing on a book, with such steady, bored persistence—so little flame and fireworks—but just the determined weariness of one adding up accounts.... What wouldn't I give for that will and discipline." Gellhorn was writing a novel herself, published as *What Mad Pursuit*, about the adventures of a young American woman reporter who has affairs and becomes disillusioned. The book caught the attention of Harry Hopkins in the Roosevelt administration, who was assembling a team of young reporters to fan out across the Depression-ravaged country and document the lives of ordinary people—the impulse that gave rise to Dorothea Lange's photographs, John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, and, best of all, the collaboration of James Agee and Walker Evans in *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*.

COURTESY HENRY HOLT

Martha Gellhorn and Ernest Hemingway, November 1940

Two episodes stand out from Gellhorn's modest contribution to this worthy effort: she made up a story about a lynching in the South and published it as fact, and she encouraged laborers in North Carolina to break factory windows to protest their working conditions. Eleanor Roosevelt, a college friend of Gellhorn's mother, admired the lynching article, and Martha explained, giddily and lamely, that she was "getting a little mixed-up around now and apparently I am a very realistic writer (or liar), because everyone assumed I'd been an eyewitness to a lynching whereas I just made it up." Her fake story dogged her for the rest of her life. And her incitement to riot got her fired by Hopkins. *The Trouble I've Seen*, Gellhorn's collection of what Moorehead gingerly calls "semi-fictional stories about the Depression," appeared in 1936 to admiring reviews. Eleanor Roosevelt praised it in her column, "My Day": "I cannot tell you how Martha Gellhorn, young, pretty, college graduate, good home, more or less Junior League background, with a touch of exquisite Paris clothes and 'esprit' thrown in, can write as she does. She has an understanding of many people, and many situations, and she can make them live for us."

GELLHORN'S FATHER DIED ON Christmas Day, 1935, and she and her mother spent the following Christmas together at Key West. One night, they walked into a bar named Sloppy Joe's, where "a large, dirty man in untidy somewhat soiled white shorts and shirt" just happened to be sitting. (Of all the gin joints in all the towns in all the world....) She was twenty-eight, Hemingway was thirty-seven. Like most of the men in Gellhorn's life, he was married. Of course, the encounter cannot have been completely by chance. It was hardly a secret that Hemingway hung out in Key West in the winter and liked to drink. And Gellhorn, along with half her generation, had already adopted Hemingway's creed as her own. "I take my code out of Hemingway," she had written to Stanley Pennell while still at Bryn Mawr. "Do you remember *A Farewell to Arms*. The hero talks to the woman; she is worried about something; and he says: 'You're brave. Nothing ever happens to the brave.' Which is somehow enough—a whole philosophy—a banner—a song—and a love. And something to fill up time—busily, passionately."

One of the oddest things about being Hemingway must have been the uncanny sense that so many of the people he met had stepped out of the pages of his own books. But Gellhorn modeled herself on Hemingway's heroes, not on his women. When he told her that he was going to Spain to write about the civil war, Gellhorn decided that she was going, too. When she arrived in Madrid in the spring of 1937, Hemingway, surrounded by his admiring entourage of fellow journalists and prostitutes, greeted her with the condescending words, "I knew you'd get here, daughter, because I fixed it up so

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you could." She checked into the Hotel Florida, where Hemingway had two rooms on the quiet side away from the shelling. Hemingway locked her in her room the first night because he didn't want her to be mistaken, as he wittily explained, for a "whore de combat." Gellhorn was furious. "I should have known at that moment what doom was," she remarked. The moment is emblematic of the seven bumpy years that followed. He wanted her home where he could find her, waiting and adoring; she wanted the life he had. According to Gellhorn, Hemingway was a "ghastly lover—wham bam thank you maam, or maybe just wham bam."

GELLHORN'S DISPATCHES FROM Spain established one of her great themes as a war reporter, the intrusion of horror into ordinary life.

> It seemed a little crazy to be living in a hotel, like a hotel in Des Moines or New Orleans, with a lobby and wicker chairs in the lounge, and signs on the door of your room telling you that they would press your clothes immediately and that meals served privately cost ten percent more, and meantime it was like a trench when they lay down an artillery barrage. The whole place trembled to the explosion of the shells.
>
> The concierge was in the lobby and he said, apologetically, "I regret this, Mademoiselle. It is not pleasant. I can guarantee you that the bombing in November was worse."

The war, as she saw it, pitted the relentless machinery of Franco's forces and his Fascist allies against the merely human resistance of the brave Loyalists. She told Eleanor Roosevelt of watching for fifty minutes "twelve black German planes, flying in a perfect circle, not varying their position, flying and bombing and diving to machine gun: and they were working on one company of Government soldiers, who had no planes or anti-aircraft to protect them but who were standing there, holding up the advance so as to permit an orderly retreat."

Gellhorn followed Hemingway back to Cuba in February 1939, where he was writing *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and expected her to keep house. Instead, much to his annoyance, she flew to Helsinki to cover the Russo-Finnish conflict, which confirmed her David-and-Goliath view of war. "I promise you," she wrote to Hemingway, "that I have never yet seen the innocent and unarmed other than hunted and destroyed." She also promised him, in a half-joking document titled "Guaranty," that she would never "brutalize my present and future husband in any way whatsoever" and that she recognized "that a very fine and sensitive writer cannot be left alone for two months and sixteen days." By September 1940 she was complaining that "E wants me for himself, altogether," and that "E's book has been an agony, like having children without interruption for months and months." She married him two months later, in Cheyenne, Wyoming, with roast moose for dinner.

Gellhorn and Hemingway honeymooned, if you could call it that, in Hong Kong, after *Collier's* hired her to cover the "Chinese army in action"—in retreat, more accurately, from the occupying Japanese forces. The journey gave Gellhorn one of the liveliest chapters in *Travels With Myself and Another*, her 1978 memoir of what she called her "horror journeys." She referred to Hemingway as U.C., for "Unwilling Companion"; while he hung out in the hotel bar in Hong Kong, she explored the opium dens, the brothels, the mah-jongg parlors and sweatshops, all overrun with refugees. She expected Hemingway to share her horror:

> When finally I visited a dank ill-lit basement factory where small children carved ivory balls within balls, a favorite tourist trinket, I could not bear to see any more. I had a mild fit of hysterics.
>
> "They look about ten years old," I shouted at U.C. "It takes three months to make one of those damned things, I think it's eight balls within balls. They'll be blind before they're twenty. And that little girl with her tortoise. We're all living on slave labor! The people are half starved! I want to get out, I can't stand this place!"
>
> U.C. considered me thoughtfully. "The trouble with you, M., is that you think everybody is exactly like you. What you can't stand, they can't stand. What's hell for you has to be hell for them. How do you know what they feel about their lives?

Their diverging temperaments could hardly be more evident: Gellhorn's utopian indignation pitted against Hemingway's stoical acceptance.

The slow unraveling of the marriage ran parallel to the worsening situation in Europe. Gellhorn insisted on reporting the war; Hemingway insisted on staying in Cuba, sailing around the Gulf of Mexico supposedly in search of German submarines. When he realized that the action was in Europe after all, he signed on with *Collier's*, Gellhorn's employer, to cover the Normandy invasion. Gellhorn was demoted: "I have been shoved back and back," she complained to Eleanor Roosevelt. "It is quite a job being a woman isn't it; you cannot do your work and simply get on with it because that is selfish.... Anyhow Ernest will get there [to Normandy] and he can always tell me about it."

By then, with the quarreling and drinking and competing, she knew it was over: "I want to escape from him and myself and from this personal life which feels like a strait jacket." She left him and he never forgave her. "Hell hath no fury like E.H. scorned," she wrote. But she continued to admire Hemingway; if he was an ordinary husband, he was also "a rare and wonderful type; he is a mysterious type too and a wise one and all sorts of things. He is a good man, which is vitally important. He is however bad for me."

IF THE BREAKUP OF HER MARRIAGE was a blow to Gellhorn, Dachau was in some way a deeper wound. "I have never been the same since," she later wrote to a friend. "It's exactly like mixing paint. Black, real true solid black, was then introduced, and I have never again come back to some state of hope or innocence or gayety which I had before." Her description in her *Collier's* article is often quoted: "We have all seen a great deal now; we have seen too many wars and too much violent dying; we have seen hospitals, bloody and messy as butcher shops; we have seen the dead like bundles lying on all the roads of half the earth. But nowhere was there anything like this. Nothing about war was ever as insanely wicked as these starved and outraged, naked, nameless dead." Her account of Dachau is the opposite of her accounts of Spain and Finland, not the intrusion of horror into the ordinary world but the reverse: "Just behind the crematorium stood the fine big modern hothouses. Here the prisoners grew the flowers that the S.S. officers loved...."

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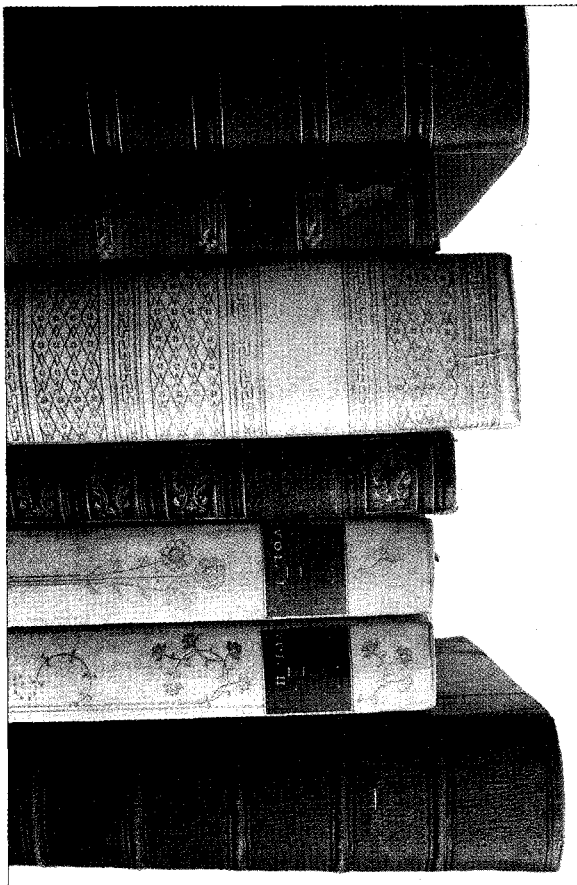

Hemingway
Woolf
DuBois
Faulkner
Ellison
Nabokov
It's All Here

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The shape of Gellhorn's life during the decades that followed was a double quest. She sought to experience as an eyewitness the horrors that the century of total war kept inventing. And, perhaps in reaction, she tried to find the great good place that would be her refuge from war and the boredom of St. Louis. She tried Cuernavaca, Rome, and Kenya before settling, during her final years, on a flat in London and a cottage in Wales. She never found the right man to share these places with her. The right man probably did not exist. Gellhorn's letters to her various lovers—a blur of doctors and diplomats, journalists and generals—are either manic professions of eternal love or depressive intimations of the impossibility of same. In 1954, she tried marriage again, only to discover a few years later that her husband, the writer T. S. Matthews, was cheating on her. She was shocked, but Edmund Wilson, a Princeton classmate of Matthews, could have warned her: "He is always in the pants of some woman."

More fun to read about are Gellhorn's relations with men she didn't (or probably didn't) sleep with. She met H. G. Wells, of all people, in the Roosevelt White House, and he took her under his wing, finding publishers and outlets for her writing, including the ill-fated lynching tale. I find myself unable to work up much curiosity about whether she slept with Wells—a point of contention among Gellhorn's biographers—though I like her riposte: "Why the hell would I sleep with a little old man when I could have any number of tall beautiful young men?" Leonard Bernstein and his piano moved into a neighboring house in Cuernavaca in 1950. "He is reported to like men (also women and goats), and is actually beautiful, which is an odd thing for a man to be, and about as natural as a 20 minute permanent wave; and full of talent and neuroses," she wrote. Bernstein treasured what he called their "peculiar sexless love affair," and told Gellhorn that he had written the song "One Hundred Easy Ways to Lose a Man" in her honor.

In 1952, while living in Rome and making arrangements to adopt an Italian war orphan, Gellhorn was pursued by Bernard Berenson, then in his late eighties, eliciting this bracing tirade:

> He has a learned mind but it does not seem a mind to me; I never heard him on painting and he may be extraordinary but you know I doubt it. I doubt if one can be really profoundly extraordinary about art, unless one has a certain fire and richness inside. He hasn't; he is a little Tanagra man, spoiled all his life by smart second-rate people. He's not interesting nor inspiring; I always felt *less* of a human being after seeing him. Did I tell you that he said to me that no one had so attacked him in his life, except Gertrude Stein. I found that funny; this came after I had carefully explained to him that I didn't trust him and he wasn't my cup of tea.

She found it funny because Berenson was implying, not very subtly, that if she did not find him attractive then she must be a lesbian.

Gellhorn writes a great deal in these letters about sex and her distaste for it. Hemingway wrote to Berenson, one jilted man to another, that Gellhorn "was not built for bed." Gellhorn seems to have agreed. "I didn't like the sex at all," she wrote to Cary Grant's ex-wife Betsy Drake in 1972. "I daresay I was the worst bed partner in five continents. And the agile and experienced men were always shits, which didn't endear sex to me as you can imagine." She felt, she often said, like a man in a woman's body. "I think I am, very largely, a man anyhow," she wrote Rosamond Lehmann. The split in her temperament between men she liked but was not attracted to (Wells, Bernstein, the war photographer Robert Capa, and even Hemingway) and men she did not much like but was attracted to (the blur of older lovers) is familiar enough in the male psyche, as Freud pointed out repeatedly. Gellhorn wondered why D. H. Lawrence wasn't satisfied with the first version of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, "a study in boredom and marital distaste," and "went on writing it until he got that highflown pornography at the end version." Her own best fiction, such as the poignant novella based on Capa's life, *Till Death Do Us Part*, skates over the territory of sexuality.

"IN A WAR YOU MUST HATE SOMEbody or love somebody," Gellhorn's Capa character remarks. "You must have a position or you cannot stand what goes on." Gellhorn's tendency to see the world in absolutes, which cannot have helped in her relations with men, also bedeviled her later writing. Understated sympathy for the victims of World War II gave her war reporting an affecting emotional resonance. But she refused, then or after, to recognize the humanity of the perpetrators. Germans, against whom she maintained a lifetime vendetta, were simply beyond the pale. "All God's chillun hid Jews" was how she summed up German denial of war guilt. The French and Italians, however, were mysteriously absolved, as though they had recovered, with the Allied victory, from some alien virus. The Israelis were always Davids, the Arabs—for whom she reserved a special venom—always Goliaths. "My belief in Israel is unwavering and I do not expect it to be faultless, unlike any other state," she wrote while covering the Six Day War. "I have never forgotten Dachau."

The Russians, with their "peculiar historical genius for oppressing and being oppressed," confounded Gellhorn's stereotypes. She traveled to Moscow in the summer of 1972 to meet Nadezhda Mandelstam, whose *Hope Against Hope* she had greatly admired. Gellhorn described their serio-comic encounters in *Travels with Myself and Another*. Before the trip she described Mandelstam as "one human pretty damn near reaching perfection, under conditions of hell." After a few weeks of "heat, awful food, exhaustion, and deep deep boredom" in Mandelstam's company, she concluded: "She is not a bit noble and I have a failing for nobility." It was Hong Kong with Hemingway all over again, as Gellhorn's sentimental idealism clashed with what she called Mandelstam's stoic "cunning and camouflage." What really riled her, though, was Mandelstam's support for the American military incursion in Vietnam. Mandelstam: "If North Vietnam wins, they will shoot three million people." Gellhorn: "Why? On what grounds do you say that?" Mandelstam: "Here they shot three million people."

"I don't think I like her," Gellhorn wrote of Mandelstam. Reading through these five hundred pages of Gellhorn's letters, the reader may come to have mixed feelings about Gellhorn as well. Despite her virtuosity in expressing her love for the little guy, she seems never to have written to him. She preferred the gossipy round of the powerful, the beautiful, and the rich. She hated gaining weight and she hated getting old. "There are no real rewards for time passing," she wrote. She staved off the inevitable by swimming every day in her private pool with Chopin and Brahms

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on her record player. She kept up-to-date with younger writers, admiring Naipaul and Ondaatje, and made friends with a "gaggle of chaps in London all half my age." "The two suicides I know" (she was writing of Hemingway and a painter friend) "were not murdering themselves with hate, but simply leaving while there was time, from the empty ruins of life, because they knew—and I think rightly—that they had finished, and that what remained was going to be bleak and belittling." She made a final journey as a reporter—"Brazil cured me of wanderlust for some time"—and then, on February 16, 1998, at the age of eighty-nine, almost blind and suffering from cancer of the ovary and liver, she took a pill she had acquired for a quick exit, and left. ■

Alan Taylor

The Collaborator

WHITE SAVAGE: WILLIAM JOHNSON AND THE INVENTION OF AMERICA
By Fintan O'Toole
(Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 402 pp., $26)

DURING THE 1750S, SIR William Johnson became the most famous American in the British Empire. Not even the amateur scientist and professional lobbyist Benjamin Franklin could compare. George Washington, a wealthy planter and provincial politician in Virginia, lagged far behind. Franklin and Washington now loom much larger in American memory because they won the revolutionary independence that Johnson resisted to his death in 1774. And those revolutionaries erased the Indian power that Johnson had exploited to make himself indispensable to the lost empire.

Born into Irish obscurity, Johnson achieved wealth and power after emigrating to colonial America during the late 1730s. Settling in the Mohawk Valley of New York, he lived on the dangerous margins of colonial society, where the British Empire encountered Indian peoples. He arrived as the imperial wars escalated between Britain and France for control of North America. Rather than blanch at the dangers, Johnson shrewdly exploited his frontier land and his violent times. Adapting quickly, he founded settlements, built mills, traded with Indians, and became the primary colonial official for dealing with them.

Unlike most colonists, who disdained the Indians, Johnson took pains to learn their customs and their words. Remarkably accessible and relatively fair, he impressed the local Mohawks, who ritually adopted him with the apt name of Warraghiyagey, which meant "a man who undertakes great things." A colonial admirer attributed Johnson's influence among the Mohawks to his "compliance with their humours in his dress and conversation."

Johnson saw opportunity in the friendship of his five hundred Mohawk neighbors. Although diminished by disease, war, and migration, they had important allies to the west among their fellow Iroquoian speakers of the Six Nations. By pleasing the Mohawks, Johnson won influence among all the Iroquois—deemed the most important of the Indian tribes because they occupied the strategic nexus of waterways between French and British America. The Iroquois were the gatekeepers of imperial war. At least, an Iroquois alliance would screen New York from invasion by the French and their Indian allies in Canada. And at best, that alliance would allow the British to invade Canada. Early and often, Johnson pitched himself as the one man who could sway the Iroquois, swinging the balance of power in North America.

By cultivating Mohawk chiefs and royal governors, Johnson became the indispensable broker of imperial relations with the American Indians. During the climactic war of 1754–1763, Johnson secured enough Iroquois support to facilitate the British conquest of Canada. During that war, he led small armies to victory at Lake George in 1755 and Fort Niagara in 1759. But his greatest triumphs came in shaping opinion. A masterful publicist and correspondent, Johnson won extra credit for his victories by dazzling the press and imperial officials. To reward Johnson, Parliament gave him £5,000, while the Crown knighted him as a baronet: he was only the second colonist to be so honored. In 1756 the Crown also promoted him to superintendent of Indian affairs in the northern colonies, with an impressive salary of £600. These rewards from Britain enhanced Johnson's clout in the colonies.

IT DID NOT PAY TO CROSS SIR William, for he twice toppled Britain's military commanders in North America. In 1755, General William Shirley offended Johnson by competing for Mohawk warriors, who were invaluable to a frontier campaign. When Shirley sent meddling emissaries among the Iroquois, Johnson bristled—and made sure that almost no warriors joined his superior officer. Johnson's political allies in New York also held up supplies desperately needed by Shirley's army. When his expedition inevitably stalled, Shirley was vulnerable to hostile insinuations cleverly spread in London by Johnson's publicists. Discredited, Shirley was sacked and summoned home to England.

Johnson bagged an even bigger prize in 1763. After the British conquest of Canada, the chief commander, Sir Jeffrey Amherst, cut Britain's costs by curtailing Johnson's budget for Indian affairs. Denied their customary presents and treated harshly by British troops, the Indians rose up in armed rebellion around the Great Lakes and in the Ohio Valley. In masterful letters to his superiors in London, Johnson made it abundantly clear that Amherst was to blame—and that only Johnson could clean up the mess. Impressed and desperate, the imperial lords recalled Amherst and more than restored Johnson's budget. Lavishing attention on the Indians, Johnson restored peace and consolidated his reputation as the most powerful man in Anglo-America.

In the meantime, he assembled in the Mohawk Valley a vast landed estate of at least 150,000 acres, which he named "Kingsland" and "Kingsborough" in honor of his ultimate patron. Within this estate, he founded the village of Johnstown, just south of a palatial mansion known as "Johnson Hall," where he entertained a steady stream of Indian chiefs, provincial officers, and British aristocrats. Fifty-five feet long by thirty-

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seven feet wide and rising two full stories (plus an attic) above a complete cellar, Johnson Hall was the largest residence on the colonial frontier. Just outside the mansion, two smaller stone structures provided a storehouse for Indian goods and an office for Johnson's records. Nearby, a visitor found a coach house, a blacksmith's shop, barns, and a council house for meeting Indians during inclement weather.

Indians daily visited Johnson Hall, indulging their curiosity and pressing Johnson to redress their grievances. In 1764, Sir William complained that "I have inexpressible trouble, every Room & Corner in my House Constantly full of Indians, each individual of whom has a thousand things to say, & ask and any person who chuses to engage their affections or obtain an ascendency over them must be the greatest Slave living & listen to them all at any hour." While grumbling in private letters, Johnson publicly treated Indians with patience, respect, and good humor. He never forgot that influence with Indians sustained his wealth and power in colonial society and the wider empire.

Visitors to Johnson Hall marveled at the overlap of European sophistication and wealth with American savagery. Johnson's compound seemed to crystallize the diverse cultural and racial strands of empire. Enslaved Africans waited on the family and their guests—and suffered pain for any infractions. The interior boasted rich furnishings imported from Europe: oil paintings, framed prints of the royal family, mahogany furniture, a billiard table, engraved swords, porcelain china, silver tableware, and fine glasses. But Johnson also proudly displayed curiosities avidly collected from Indians: bows and arrows, wampum belts, baskets, pipes, and deerskin attire decorated with beadwork. He also displayed the pelts and antlers of wild mammals. This celebrated "cabinet of curiosities" attracted inquiring correspondence from gentlemen on both sides of the Atlantic.

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As with Indian curios, so with Indian women: Johnson transmuted a forest association into an emblem of genteel privilege. With fellow gentlemen of worldly tastes, Johnson bantered about his rakish exploits, hard drinking, and fornicating with women of lesser standing and another color. In 1762 he wrote in a knowing tone to his older friend Goldsbrow Banyar:

> Should you deign to pay me a visit, I shall endeavor to make everything agreeable to you, and introduce you to a Princess of the first Rank here, who has large possessions, as well as parts, provided I could be assured of your paying her more civility than you did to the lady I shewed you at Albany, and dischargeing the necessary Duty, which men of years and infirmities are seldom capable of.

Mohawk Valley gossip insisted that Johnson lived "in a very genteel style, and very hospitably, keeping a number of young Indian women about him in [the] quality of concubines, and offering them in that respect to gentlemen who happened to lodge at his house."

During his travels among the Iroquois villages, Johnson accumulated mistresses. A friend noted that "Sir William like Solomon has been eminent in his Pleasures with the brown Ladies." In addition to their carnal pleasures, the liaisons and the children they produced created a kinship network that bound Johnson to Indian families, with their obligations and benefits. Johnson had to bestow particular favors and presents on his Indian kin, while they provided him with inside information and political support. A man of lusty appetites but shrewd calculation, Johnson understood the multiple advantages of his native mistresses and children.

The most enduring and important of those mistresses was Konwatsitsaienni, or Molly Brant, who bore their first child in September 1759. A colonist described her as a "daughter to a sachem, who possessed an uncommonly agreeable person, and good understanding." It was no coincidence that in 1759 Johnson became much better informed about, and better able to manage, the complex inner workings of Iroquois diplomacy. A colonist slyly noted, "As she is descended from and connected with the most noble families of the Indians, she was of great use to Sir William in his Treaties with those people. He knew that Women govern the Politics of savages as well [as] the refined part of the World and therefore always kept up a good understanding with the brown Ladies."

The couple never married, at least not in a colonial ceremony. In his will, Johnson described Molly as his "prudent & faithfull Housekeeper" and as the mother of his "natural children." But he treated her and their eight children with respect, honoring them with his last name and significant bequests (albeit lesser bequests than those received by his three elder children by a European woman). Molly conducted his household with grace, intelligence, and sound judgment, which charmed genteel visitors, who overlooked the irregularity of her status and the color of her skin. After a visit in 1765, Lord Adam Gordon wrote to Johnson, "My Love to Molly & thanks for her good Breakfast."

In grand exaggeration, Johnson's *amours* became legendary. One story ran that, when asked the number of his children, Johnson smiled and replied, "That is a question that I cannot answer." Crossing the Atlantic, the legend appeared in the popular novel *Chrysal: or the Adventures of a Guinea*, written by Charles Johnstone and published in London in 1761. The novel featured a superintendent as accomplished in Indian love as in Indian war. He built a village to accommodate his mistresses, who "often amounted to hundreds," and "there was scarce a house in any of the tribes around him from which he had not taken a temporary mate, and added a child of his to their number." Procuring a copy of the novel, Johnson took a sly pleasure in the celebrity of his libido.

His dramatic personality and his multicultural world have long attracted biographers. Appealing for readers, the authors emphasize the cultural overlap in Johnson's world—and especially his native mistresses and their children. Rarely can authors resist straining for an anachronistic analogy, usually medieval. Time and again, they cast Johnson as a frontier lord living in a stone castle among native retainers. Francis Jennings writes:

> What Johnson aimed at, and he achieved it in his own lifetime, was lordship over those Iroquois in the

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> pattern of medieval lords who led tribesmen to battle, acquired title to their lands, and did not disdain the privilege to be free with their maidens.... Johnson championed them exactly as the medieval lord looked after his peasant manpower—because it was the foundation of his own power.

Bernard Bailyn similarly describes the "biracial manor court where [Johnson] lived the uninhibited life of a marchland baron, surrounded by his illegitimate children."

In *White Savage*, Fintan O'Toole adopts that motif, but with an Irish spin. He casts Johnson as "a Gaelic lord, an idealized feudal chieftain.... He gathered around him broken shards of the old Irish order: harp music and the Gaelic language, Catholicism and the ancient sacred spring of his Warrenstown childhood." Johnson enjoyed "a kind of feudal Irish lordship in the Mohawk Valley." In O'Toole's view, Johnson was a conflicted man shaped and haunted by his Irish past.

O'Toole defines Irish culture as a tenacious allegiance to the Roman Catholic faith, and to Gaelic words and ways deeply rooted in the Middle Ages. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, this medieval culture was intensified by a relentless confrontation with British invaders who were Protestants. During the 1690s, the invaders completed their conquest by defeating the "Jacobite" supporters of the Catholic King James. The Protestant victor, King William III, tightened English control by imposing penal laws constraining education, inheritance, and office-holding by Irish Catholics. Most of the Irish land passed from Catholic into Protestant ownership, condemning the majority to work as tenants or laborers.

O'Toole insists that the victors inflicted psychological wounds by compelling the defeated Irish to hide their Gaelic and Catholic culture. The victims included Johnson's father Christopher: "He had learned how to live with the slow death of a defeated culture, how to keep his head down, how to hold his tongue, how to move amid undercurrents, how to survive." Taken to America, this inherited pain endowed Sir William with his special asset, an empathetic understanding for Indians facing British conquest: "He, like the Iroquois, had grown up in a culture that felt itself in danger of extinction."

Looking at the same limited sources, other biographers see Christopher Johnson as an opportunist who converted to the Anglican form of Protestantism favored by the British establishment. Undaunted by the lack of evidence, O'Toole insists that father Johnson remained a lifelong Catholic anguished by the British conquest and devastated when his son converted to Anglicanism. But he also discounts the sincerity of that conversion. William was merely following the cynical example of his uncle and patron, Sir Peter Warren, who became a wealthy and powerful admiral in the Royal Navy. Warren invested some of that wealth in Mohawk Valley lands, which he entrusted to Johnson's management: the young man's invitation to colonial America. O'Toole insists that, for both men, Anglicanism was a thin veneer adopted to get ahead "while remaining true to Catholicism in private prayer." He insists that they nurtured "a silent hinterland beyond their public selves." But how can O'Toole know what they thought in private prayer? And how can we discern a private hinterland that remains silent?

He finds Catholic hints in stray slivers of evidence. Peter Warren did not complete the legal formalities of Anglican conversion until the year of his death. In another sliver, an Irish-born teacher, Charles Reilly, sought Johnson's patronage in 1749 by writing a letter in Latin. "As the language of the Mass and the priesthood, Latin had deep importance to the Irish adherents of an outlawed church," O'Toole confides. Reilly "understood, and wished Johnson to know that he understood," that they shared "the painful and never quite total adoption of a new personality."

In 1755, at the Battle at Lake George, Johnson captured the French commander Baron de Dieskau. Sparing his life from the Mohawks, Johnson graciously treated Dieskau as an honored guest. O'Toole notes that a decade before, at the Battle of Fontenoy in Flanders, Dieskau had served in a French army that featured Irish-Catholic refugees, including some of Johnson's Warren cousins. "In his great kindness to Dieskau," O'Toole concludes, "Johnson was perhaps honouring a memory of these kinsmen and remembering how easily ... he could have been their comrade rather than their enemy."

According to O'Toole, a private Irish Catholicism also shaped Johnson's frontier policies, contributing to his unusual respect for Indian beliefs. In 1766 he negotiated peace with Pontiac, a chief who had helped to lead the Indian rebellion. O'Toole insists that "Pontiac and Johnson enacted an elaborate version of the Catholic ritual of Confession." Mohawks introduced Johnson to the sacred and healing waters of Saratoga Springs, which, O'Toole suggests, Johnson equated with a Catholic holy well from his Irish youth.

Catholic Irishness also allegedly framed Johnson's disgust at Pennsylvania's Scotch-Irish settlers, who treated Indians with larcenous and murderous disdain. "The Catholic Jacobite poets of Johnson's youth, and his parents' prime, railed against lower-class Presbyterian settlers in exactly the same terms," O'Toole writes. To develop his frontier estate, Johnson needed tenant farmers, and he preferred to recruit Gaelic-speaking Catholics from the Scottish Highlands. "Outwardly and officially an enthusiastic upholder of the established Anglican Church, he was nevertheless forming an unofficial Catholic colony under his personal protection," O'Toole observes. Johnson even employed an Irish-born Catholic priest to conduct mass for them. This the author considers a "quiet rebellion" against the Protestant establishment.

To clinch his psychological case, O'Toole dwells on an angry letter that Johnson wrote in 1764 to his superiors in London. The letter denounces a rival peacemaker, General John Bradstreet, for pretending that the Indian rebels had submitted to him and had become British subjects. Writing "in terms poignantly redolent of his own Irish Catholic background," Johnson raged against Bradstreet for daring to describe the Indians as subjugated. "A hidden voice from Johnson's own history is sounding out through the words he puts in the mouths

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of the Indians." Here, then, is O'Toole's trump card to reveal that Johnson privately resented Ireland's subordination and denied that the Irish had accepted British domination.

O'TOOLE PORTRAYS JOHNSON as a complex character tormented by a psychological tension between his past and present, and between his inner and outer selves. Superficially, he basked in wealth and power won by serving a Protestant empire bent upon subordinating Indians as it had conquered the Irish; but within, he squirmed in psychic pain at having "compromised with the new political, religious, and cultural order." There could never be inner peace for an empire-builder who nurtured "the self-image of the dispossessed Gaelic families." In this double consciousness, Johnson belongs in a modern novel—which is exactly what O'Toole has produced.

O'Toole's book appeals to the current taste for a secret reality cleverly revealed by gathering deeply hidden clues to subvert an official story. The beauty of secret histories and conspiracy theories is that they need not weigh the preponderance of evidence. Instead, they can freely connect disparate slivers into an ominous pattern mandated by prior conviction. But let us imagine that a historian should seek probability in the most economical explanation: the one that requires the fewest convolutions. If so, the surviving documents consistently reveal Johnson as thoroughly dedicated to the British Empire, its Protestant sovereign, and his Anglican church.

A relentlessly ambitious man, Johnson cultivated a genteel style that disdained overt emotions, especially in religious beliefs. In eighteenth-century Britain and America, a fundamental divide separated the genteel few from the common many who had to work with their hands as farmers, artisans, sailors, or day laborers. Public authority and high social standing belonged to "the better sort" who combined superior wealth with polished manners, some classical learning, and an honorable reputation.

Loyalty, ambition, gentility: these qualities best illuminate the bits of evidence that O'Toole kidnaps from their context. The late completion of Warren's formal conversion attests to the weakening of the penal laws, for it mattered not a whit to his career on behalf of a Protestant monarch. And in his life and his will, he lavished benefactions on Protestant churches and missionaries—long after any supposed need to cover his convictions. But what of that Latin letter from the Irish schoolteacher? More than a code language for Catholic priests and tormented converts, Latin was coveted by all educated men with genteel aspirations. John Adams and Thomas Jefferson cherished their Latin learning, but neither was remotely Catholic. In 1749, Johnson needed a Latin instructor to teach his children gentility, not Catholicism. And there was nothing Gaelic or Catholic about Johnson's rage against murderous settlers. Amherst's replacement as army commander, General Thomas Gage, made identical characterizations—and Gage was thoroughly English and just as Anglican as Johnson.

O'Toole also strains credulity by finding an ambiguous allegiance to Britain and Protestantism in Johnson's graciousness to Dieskau. Far more relevant is that Johnson named his summer house "Castle Cumberland" to honor the Duke of Cumberland, who was Dieskau's British opponent at the earlier Battle of Fontenoy. Moreover, in 1746 at Culloden in Scotland, the ruthless duke massacred Catholic rebels, preserving the Protestant establishment in Great Britain. As a byword for Protestant victory, "Cumberland" hardly suggested a hidden fondness for Catholicism.

Indeed, O'Toole knows that Johnson did not need the supposed ambiguity of a convert to treat Dieskau generously. A living and grateful Dieskau was Johnson's greatest asset in 1755: a witness that a colonial commander could live by a European code of elite civility. After speculating wildly, O'Toole belatedly acknowledges "that Dieskau was a very valuable prize, a high-class vehicle in which to carry [Johnson's] reputation far beyond the forests of New York."

Nor did Johnson rebel against Protestantism when he recruited Catholic tenants from Scotland. To develop his estate, Johnson desperately needed tenants, but almost all Protestant colonists preferred their abundant opportunities to acquire freehold farms. Employing a Catholic priest was simply good business for a Protestant landlord seeking the best available supply of tenants. Johnson emulated the hundreds of Anglican landlords of Ireland who employed Catholic laborers and tenants on their estates. By no means were those landlords betraying their empire.

BUT WHAT ABOUT JOHNSON'S rant against General Bradstreet for describing Indians as British subjects? Can that be read as an Irish discomfort with British power? In fact, Johnson regarded Bradstreet as an old and dangerous rival once again meddling in Indian affairs. By pretending that Indians had become subjects, Bradstreet seemed to pull off a coup meant to please the imperial lords in London. Apparently he had trumped Johnson, who had long (and accurately) insisted that Indians were fiercely independent peoples who would become allies but never subjects. Bradstreet's fraud had to be exposed quickly and thoroughly—hence Johnson's anger.

Dismissive of colonial Protestants, O'Toole lumps their diverse denominations into one malignant mass of "lunatic enthusiasts." This lumping especially distorts when he casts another Johnson foil, Reverend Eleazar Wheelock, as representing "pressure from the Anglican Church." In fact, Wheelock was a New England Congregationalist by denomination, and an evangelical Calvinist by theology. This made him a "dissenter" from the official Anglican church led by the king. As a staunch royalist, Johnson distrusted "dissenters" as potential regicides and republicans. Johnson's eventual aversion to Wheelock registered his devotion to Anglicanism—not some closet Catholicism.

Indeed, initially Johnson found common ground with Wheelock as fellow Protestants united against the influence of Catholicism among the Indians. O'Toole never tells readers that in the early 1760s Johnson supported Wheelock's controversial program for spreading dissenting missionaries and teachers among the Iroquois to counteract the French Jesuits. While Johnson admired the talents of the Jesuits, he dreaded their influence as a menace to British rule in North America. Johnson preferred Anglican missionaries, but they were so scarce in the early 1760s that he had

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to cooperate with Wheelock to achieve their primary goal, which was to roll back Catholicism.

During the late 1760s, Johnson broke with Wheelock when he foolishly bypassed the superintendent to meddle in Indian affairs. Such meddling was always anathema to Johnson, who jealously guarded his monopoly in Indian relations. The break came more easily because, at decade's end, the Anglican Church could provide a new and growing stream of missionaries to replace Wheelock's dissenters. Sparing no expense, Johnson repaired or built three Anglican chapels, and he subsidized Anglican teachers and missionaries for both the settlers and the Indians throughout the Mohawk Valley. A leading Anglican effused, "Although Sir William, like Solomon, has been eminent in his Pleasures with the brown Ladies, yet he may lay the Foundation of a Building in the Mohawk Country that may be of more real use, than the very splendid Temple that Solomon built."

INDEED, JOHNSON BECAME THE leading lay spokesman for Anglicanism in the colonies. In part, his increased zeal reflected an anxiety over his eternal fate by an aging man in deteriorating health. But it also expressed dismay at the growing colonial resistance to the authority of the Crown. Johnson depended on that Crown for his income and his authority, and painful experience with New York's elected assembly had taught him to disdain popular politics. He hoped to save the empire by increasing American Anglicans, whom he deemed "the faithfullest Subjects of the Crown."

In particular, Johnson urged the Crown to appoint an American Anglican bishop to facilitate the ordination of more clergy. This proposal outraged the colonial majority, who were dissenters. They suspected a plot to impose taxes to support the Church of England. Widely and deeply believed, the anti-bishop propaganda compounded tensions between the colonial dissenters and their British rulers. That tension deepened Johnson's antipathy to the Patriot resistance to British taxes during the 1760s and 1770s. O'Toole's subtitle links William Johnson to "the invention of America," but in fact Johnson worked to prevent the invention of America by defending the empire.

O'Toole repeatedly pulls Johnson out of his eighteenth-century context to plunk him into a continuous stream of Irish nationalism defined in twentieth-century terms. He cannot imagine an Irish authenticity disconnected from Catholicism or informed by values other than Gaelic traditionalism. Of course, he has plenty of company in seeing an unbroken tradition of uncompromising Catholic and Gaelic resistance to British rule leading inexorably from seventeenth-century dispossession to a twentieth-century republic; but that company does not include Irish academic historians of the past thirty years, who have recovered a more nuanced picture of their eighteenth-century past. That century neither reproduced the religious wars of the seventeenth century nor did it anticipate the sectarian nationalism of later centuries. The mid–eighteenth century was an age of compromises, evasions, and new (but later lost) opportunities for mutual tolerance. Official enforcement of the penal laws became sporadic and inefficient, giving Catholics hope that their oppression would wither away.

Far from a trace element, Protestants were one-quarter of the population, and they often expressed a devotion to Ireland that matched any Catholic's. Most were Presbyterians, who resented the official advantages of the Anglicans almost as much as the Catholics did. During the 1790s, that shared resentment led to the United Irish movement, which pursued a secular and rationalist version of nationalism. Violent repression killed that movement and subsequently divided the Protestant minority from the Catholic majority. During the nineteenth century, the division led that majority to develop the more romantic, Gaelic, and Catholic nationalism that ultimately created the Irish republic—and that O'Toole insists on reading backward.

The shame of O'Toole's misreading is that an Irish heritage did indeed shape Johnson's reaction to his American opportunities—but he championed an Anglican and a genteel Ireland rather than a Catholic folk culture. In an insightful (but unpublished) doctoral dissertation from 1975, John Christopher Guzzardo offers a more persuasive reading of Johnson's fondness for Irish symbols and Irish friends. Those resonances were overwhelmingly Anglican in faith and British in allegiance. Johnson and most of his cronies belonged to the Ireland of "the Pale": the Anglicized zone near Dublin where ambitious men served the Protestant ascendancy by dominating the Catholic natives. According to Guzzardo, Johnson worked to re-create "a traditional Anglo-Irish countryside" characterized by "the regular army troops, the Anglican chapel and congregation, [and] the creole collaborators." These elements "represented forces which had molded his family's Irish destiny for a century."

Rather than make a painful compromise with the British Empire, Sir William Johnson made it his own, exploiting its distant possibilities to achieve a wealth and power far beyond what he could have achieved at home in Ireland. With good reason, he never stinted in praising the Protestant monarch who was his patron. Far from feeling torn, Johnson was smug in his loyalties and triumphs. He was the consummate collaborator. ■

CORRESPONDENCE

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written. Immediately after Glaucon comments that the image of the cave is a strange image and presents strange prisoners, Socrates replies in the present tense: "They're like us." Human insight will never be sundered from opinion. Accordingly, the dialogues teem with Socratic disclaimers like "so it appears" and "it seems to me," especially at its putatively highest points. That is why Socratic activity is called "philosophy"—the *love* of wisdom—and not wisdom itself. Those self-anointed few who suppose they have ascended beyond mere opinion (and so beyond the rest of us) are neither wise people nor philosophers. The proper name for them is fools. I'm not especially religious, but I pray for our country on account of their current influence.

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EARLY IN 1952, LEO STRAUSS ASKED me, one of his students, to escort him to the local precinct office so that he could register to vote in that year's presidential election. It may be of some interest to Linker, who referred to him as "blatantly hostile to democracy," that Strauss wanted to vote for Democrat Adlai Stevenson.

WALTER BERNS
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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Reinie and Woody

DEMOCRATIC REALISM, PROgressive realism, ethical realism—the pageant of the paradoxes goes on. The adjectives betray a bad conscience about the noun, they cleanse the noun of its brutality, and raise it up, so that it may be possible to be edifying without being stupid. The war in Iraq, and its plenitude of unanticipated consequences, has raised a suspicion that idealism might be stupid; and there is no denying the hallucinatory quality of a large part of the administration's analysis of the war. These days realism can mean nothing more than lucidity. And there is nothing really paradoxical about any of the above coinages: realism is not always the servant of cynicism, and more people have died at the hands of idealists than at the hands of realists. Moreover, there is no justification of power that cannot become a justification of evil. These are all commonplaces, but they were not always so: they were introduced into the American understanding largely by Reinhold Niebuhr, the greatest thinker about morality and power in the modern era. Niebuhr is the new god of Bush-era liberals. They could do worse, though I wish they would stop skipping all the religious stuff. (He was a professor at the Union Theological Seminary, not a fellow at the Center for American Progress.) It was not until very recently that I was made to appreciate the deep affinities between the thought of Reinhold Niebuhr and the thought of Brent Scowcroft.

THE CHILDREN OF LIGHT ARE BEING sloppy. They treat all that is useful to their argument against the war, all the anti-Bush authorities, as essentially the same. I am confident that Niebuhr would have opposed the war in Iraq, but I am confident also that he would have despised Scowcroft, who is the most eminent representative of unethical realism in America. Niebuhr's opposition to the war would have been based, I think, on his principled distaste for Bush's style of nationalism, which he would have regarded as auto-idolatry, and on his insistence that the legitimacy of such an enterprise must be conferred by international institutions. It may be Niebuhr's teachings about the love of country that hold the most stinging rebuke to Bush's jingoism. "We are the most powerful nation on earth," he observed, in a typical passage, in *Christianity and Society* in 1950. "We are also sufficiently virtuous to be tempted to the assumption that our power is the fruit of our virtue." The president surrendered to that temptation long ago. He is contentedly blind to what Niebuhr, in another essay, called "the immoral elements in all historical success."

THE BUSH YEARS ARE A FINE TIME TO rediscover the place of self-criticism in patriotism, the corruption of nationalism by self-love. And yet the liberal construction of Niebuhr's idea disturbs me. A connection is angrily made between the heartlessness of much of Bush's domestic policy and the thoughtlessness of much of Bush's foreign policy, to the effect that we have no right to make Iraq a better place until we make America a better place. Our power is neutralized by our imperfection. Now, whatever one's opinion of the Iraq war, this was not Niebuhr's view of the relation of morality to force. More generally, it is an erroneous view of the relation between domestic policy and foreign policy. The one does not, or should not, shape the other. A state that treats its citizens justly sometimes behaves abominably beyond its borders, and a state that treats its citizens unjustly sometimes is a force for good abroad. When we fought Hitler, we were a Jim Crow country. Colonialism was to a large extent the odious project of liberal states. If Bush's foreign policy is scandalous, it cannot be because his environmental policy is scandalous. So I do not see what bearing the reform of Congress or the repeal of the tax cut will have upon the objectives and the methods of our struggle against Islamism. Green yourselves all you want, they will still wish to kill you. When I hear liberals synchronizing all things, I am reminded not of Reinhold Niebuhr but of his very opposite among the intellectuals of his time, the charismatic and repulsive Simone Weil. She wrote in 1939 that France's colonial possessions could disqualify it from the fight against the Third Reich, because "there must not be a single genuine lover of freedom in the whole world who can have a valid reason for hating France." In 1939! Weil hated totalitarianism, but she loved purity. Niebuhr insisted that in politics purity is a sin. The new Niebuhrians should be wary of their own wholeness, and of the satisfaction that comes from the belief that everything is connected to everything else. Policy is not the work of monists. The exercise of American power, when it is right, cannot wait upon the attainment of American perfection. America will have to use force against its enemies even if many millions of Americans are without health care.

AS I WAS ASSEMBLING MY LITTLE INVENtory of realisms, I came upon still another one, even bleaker and more disillusioned. "You do the best you can within the concentration camp," Woody Allen told a reporter from *The Washington Post*. I had no idea the East Side was so bad. "If you face reality too much," he added dolorously, "it kills you. . . . It's just an awful thing, and in that context you've got to find an answer to the question: why go on?" And so on in the same undergraduate vein, just more of Allen's bargain-basement despair—but then he explained the character of the darkness. "Once you get up in years, like seventies, there's nothing good about it. The dynamite women you see on the street, that world is gone to you. . . . One of the great pastimes of my life was eying girls in short skirts, and that's gone. . . . I'm not in bed with any of them." So that's it: nobody is coming upstairs to see his kvetchings. He isn't getting laid and it's Auschwitz. This is not what Primo Levi had in mind. It is also a curious complaint for a married man to make; but realism is realism. Allen concluded with this lasting reflection on the human condition: "Warren Beatty once said to me many years ago, being a star is like being in a whorehouse with a credit card, and I never found that. For me, it was like being in a whorehouse with a credit card that has expired." Give the man a Gitane! Why do people continue to honor this morbid fool? What is so fascinating about his corduroy puerility? In any event, we must now expand the ranks of the undeceived, and to democratic realism, progressive realism, and ethical realism add penile realism. Compared to him, however, we are all idealists.

LEON WIESELTIER

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What Ancient History Tells Us about the Present

Our strange indifference to events south of the border

Since the election of Hugo Chavez as president of Venezuela in 1998, there has been a drastic erosion of U.S. influence south of the Rio Grande. The most recent manifestations are the election victories of the coca-chewing populist Evo Morales in Bolivia and of the socialist Michelle Bachelet in Chile. And the anti-U.S. Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador may very well be elected president of Mexico in July.

It's not as if the new populists in Latin America are trying to duck our attention. Recently Chavez declared, "I think Hitler would be like a suckling baby next to George W. Bush." If Chavez were a Muslim leader, this would be front-page news. But because he says it in Spanish, everyone yawns. Come on, folks. Chavez is sitting on top of 6.5 percent of the world's proven oil reserves.

—Niall Ferguson

A Star Is Born

Auf wiedersehen, Gerhard Schröder. Guten tag, Angela Merkel

Although the new German chancellor, Angela Merkel, has a lot of work to do to revive her country's economy, on foreign affairs she has already demonstrated a voice of moral seriousness and balanced judgment. Perhaps this has something to do with her coming of age in the police state of Erich Honeker's East Germany.

Consider, for example, Mrs. Merkel's response to Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad: "The absolutely unacceptable provocations of the Iranian president demand a reply from us. No one who has questioned the right of Israel to exist and disavowed the existence of the Holocaust can expect Germany to show the least tolerance in these questions. We [Germans] have learned from our history."

—Tod Lindberg

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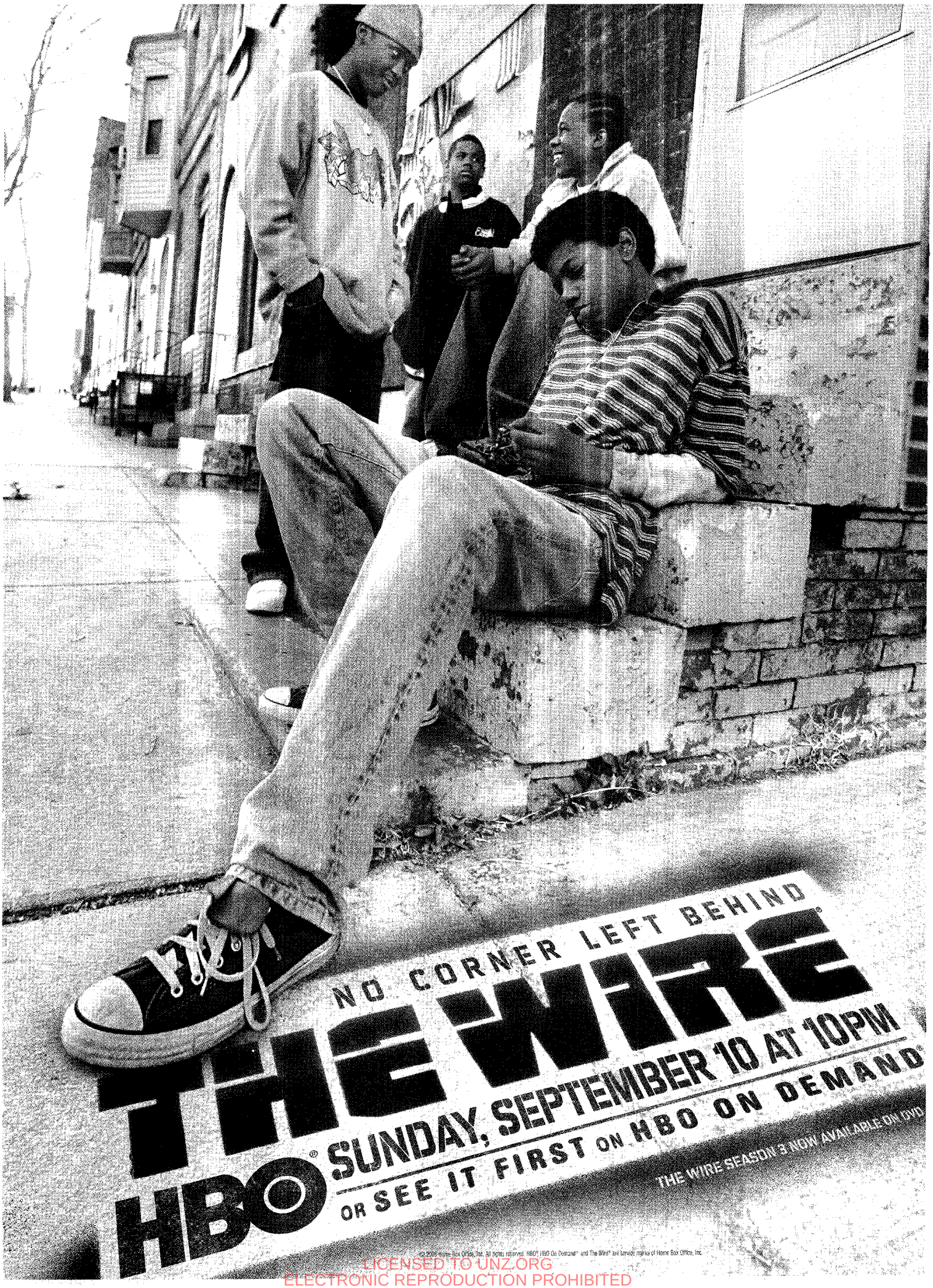
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